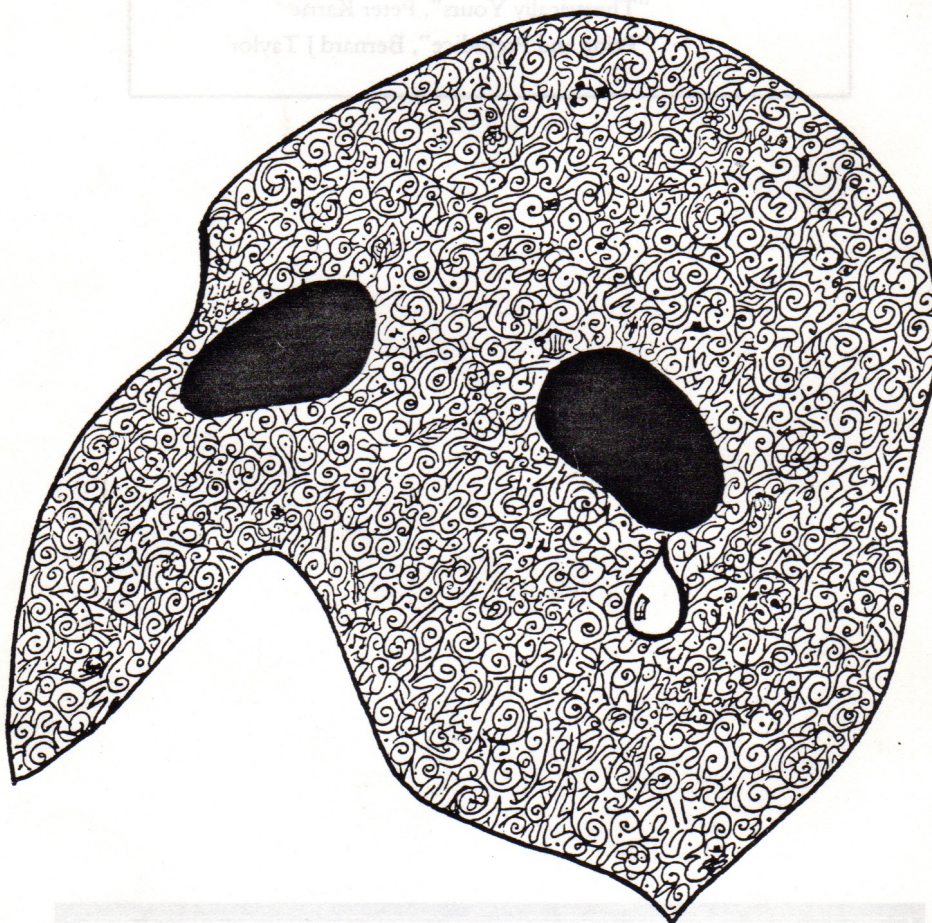


Issue Six

Autumn 1994

Beneath the Mask



£1.50

The Phantom Appreciation Society magazine

THE PHANTOM APPRECIATION SOCIETY

Salkyns, Gt Canfield, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM22 6SX, England.

Telephone: (0279) 870285

The Phantom of the Opera fan club

Founders: Christine Daaé
Christine Karrie

Editor: Christine Daaé
Contributing Editor: Rae Dunnill
Merchandise Officers: Christine Karrie
Sarah Hopkins

"Inspirational Music":
"Theatrically Yours", Peter Karrie
"Pride and Prejudice", Bernard J Taylor

The Phantom Appreciation Society is a non-profit making fan club, run by fans for fans. We are happy to accept all contributions from readers - views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the editor. There is no intent to breach the copyright of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber and the Really Useful Group, Cameron Macintosh Ltd or anyone else involved with The Phantom of the Opera.

Editorial

Sorry to everyone who's waited for ages for a reply to a letter. I've just got engaged and I'm hardly at home, which means I'm having difficulty replying to individual letters. Unless you specifically ask for a reply and include an SAE or IRC, I'll probably put a reply in with your next newsletter, or in the magazine somewhere. Apologies to Tonia Wand who sent an IRC and waited about 2 months for a reply anyway!! But please do keep sending in letters, questions, articles etc. The best parts of the magazine are the discussions started by you.

A few members went to Paris only to find the Phantom exhibition had been replaced by one on masked balls. The Opera House's material said the Phantom exhibition was there, the tourist office said it'd be there, and no one's French is good enough to find out exactly what happened. Read Jeanette Birt's piece about her visit later in this issue, and if you go to Paris be sure to visit the Musee d'Orsay where this is a section on the Opera House.

Congratulations to two recently married Phantom cast members - Claire Moore and Henk Poort (no, not to each other). On a sad note, John Aron, who was the original cast Piangi, died earlier this year.

We are selling some magazines through Dress Circle, for the same price that members pay minus 25p per issue p&p. Anyone who picked up a copy there - turn to the back page for subscription details.

Thanks in this issue to my sister Ali for proof reading some of it, my long-suffering fiancé for sticking hundreds of stamps on envelopes, Christine K for her various contributions, Andrea Stephenson and Kathryn Bell for organising a get-together for members near Manchester, and Lynne and John Pearl in Canada for helping CK and I have such a wonderful trip last month. You may also notice we've pinched a few ideas from "Phantom Notes", including listing "Inspirational music" for each issue.

Christine Daaé
Editor

CONTRIBUTIONS GUIDELINES: We welcome all contributions. For articles, long letters etc, it makes it much, much easier for us if you can type them, in a fairly plain typeface - not an elaborate or italic font. This means we can scan things in rather than spend hours typing up! The scanner seems to cope best with 12 or 14 point size, and without indented paragraphs. Sans serif fonts appear to do best with double or 1.5 line spacing. These aren't strict conditions, just guidelines to make it easier this end, so don't worry if none of that means anything to you. Contributions may be edited.

We also really need good artwork and cartoons. Please send photocopies or include return postage, and send clear pen and ink drawings. We've had some good things sent in which have been pale pencil drawings that we couldn't use because they wouldn't copy. Also, the more we have to photocopy things to reduce them, the more they lose quality, so smaller pictures actually do better than A4 ones.

As we don't have a great deal of artwork sent in, we're thinking of changing the format and not having an illustrated cover. This would mean the text would start on the first page, and you'd get a couple more pages for your money. If we get some good cover pics we won't change, or if you feel strongly that you'd prefer it as it is. Please write and let us know what you think.

Do any of our US readers know any of the people who did the artwork for Phantom Notes, particularly their cartoonist? If you do, please let them know about us and see if they'd like to continue their excellent work here...

PHANTOM FICTION: In the last issue we asked for your contributions for a planned Phantom fiction magazine. We haven't had much response, so we're going to make this magazine for next Christmas - the deadline for submissions is now 1st September 1995. Please type **all** entries, or print them in a fairly plain typeface, ie nothing curly or italic (guidelines as above). We want any Phantom-related fiction or poems, and some artwork. We are quite happy to accept anonymous contributions. Please think up a title for your piece, don't leave it to us!

We don't know how much the magazine will cost, it depends how long it is, but it will probably be £3 or so.

PAS T-shirts: Thanks for your orders - you should have your T-shirts by now, or they'll be with you very soon. We had quite a few orders after the deadline, hence the delay. We'll be doing more next spring so you can buy them for the summer.

CHANGE OF ADDRESSES: Christine Karrie is now at college, and says could everyone (not literally everyone, just those who want to) write to her at: **Laura Edwards, W29 Alwyn Hall, King Alfred's College, Sparkford Road, Winchester, SO22 4NR, UK.** Rae "Caustic" Dunnill has also moved numerous times so letters sent to the address in Issue Four won't reach her. New address: **Rae Dunnill, Room 11, 201 Courtis Road, London, SW15 3AX.**

Christine urged me, on the back of an envelope, to mention "The latest version of the GL novel and cover (frawgh) by David Bergen", so there, I've mentioned it, though I don't know anything about it yet... Presumably it's a new edition with a gorgeous cover.

CAST INFO

LONDON: Ethan Freeman, Jill Washington/Claire Moore, Simon Bowman. Clive Carter left on 10th September (boohoo). Ethan is planning to stay until Feb/March next year. Current rumours suggest that Rob Guest, Sydney Phantom, might take over.

MANCHESTER: Big cast change, lots of people are leaving. Dave Willetts, Lisa Hull and many other cast members go on 8th October. Dave does a concert in Manchester on 16th. New cast will be: Mark Mckerracher, an American opera singer who's played Valjean in London, Nicky Ankara, and Mike Sterling (who's recently had a second daughter, well his wife has anyway) remains as Raoul. Sandra Dugdale comes in as Carlotta. Paul Monaghan is staying as is Alan Rice. Simon Green goes from being Andre to being the resident director.

Dave is on "Songs of Praise" on 9th October. After leaving Manchester he'll be recording Jesus on a symphonic recording of JCS. Hooray.

We'd love a review of Dave's last night, so if you go, please tell us about it. We'd like to know what you think of the new cast too.

NEW YORK: Davis Gaines, Mary D'Arcy.

TORONTO: Peter Karrie, Glenda Balkan/June Crowley, David Rogers. Peter plays the Phantom until January 1995. He'll then return home for a month or so (hooray), and on **14th February 1995** will be doing a **concert at St. David's Hall, Cardiff**. The concert will also feature Claire Moore. He'll then be taking the Canadian touring Phantom to Hong Kong and Singapore. (Donations to the "flying round the world to see Peter in Phantom" fund gratefully accepted...)

WANTED - US CORRESPONDANT: We really need someone to gather cast information, details on the touring companies over there. It's rather hard getting the info here because it involves spending lots of money phoning theatres at strange times of night, and finding you've been given the wrong number and no one knows anything helpful. So, would any of our American members like to become our US correspondent? In return for your hard work, you'll have your name on the title page and, um, we'll be very nice to you. And if you do a startlingly wonderful job of it for a few issues, you'll get a free subscription. Please write in if you think you can do it.

PETER KARRIE FAN CLUB: The one listed before no longer exists. Peter's fan club is now being set up in Canada. For more details, send an SASE/IRC to: **Peter Karrie Fan Club, c/o Dot McFarlane, 224 Bruce St, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 1R5, CANADA**. We promise this one IS operating!

As well as this, you can buy Peter's tapes, T-shirts and gorgeous publicity photos from Avon Boutique in Canada. His pics are now available in 8" x 10", perfect for drooling over as you listen to his album.

ALAN RICE RISKS LIFE AND LIMB...

...talking to Andrea Stephenson and Kathryn "Firmin" Bell. Alan is Manchester's Firmin. Written up by Andrea Stephenson.

First impressions are important... I can't remember my first impression of Alan Rice because Kathryn and I were too busy retrieving our jaws from the pavement. In the words of Miss Firmin-Bell (!): "Swoon - he's wonderful!" Not much like Firmin either although at the opening of the show he did have his own moustache - "I was looking in the mirror every morning and thinking "Firmin", and I thought My God, I can do without that".

He thinks Firmin is "the man who is more interested in money than the Opera but very interested in the ballet girls". He has a feeling André and Firmin met at school and perhaps that, like in public schools, André was Firmin's little servant. On the subject of Madame Firmin, Alan says "I think she was put in just to make it look that André and Firmin weren't gay partners!".

Getting the role of Firmin wasn't easy for Alan however, as since 1987 he's been auditioning on average twice a year for it and has been asked to sing "Prima Donna" again and again! At one point he wasn't sure which of the managers they wanted him as - as well as "Prima Donna" they made him sing "What a blessed relief, what a Masquerade" about six times. The audition at which he finally got the part (and aren't we glad he did) was held in the bar at Her Majesty's rather than on the stage - Alan's comment at the time was "Oh God, demotion". But thank Erik someone there could see talent.

Questions & Answers

Please send in your questions on any aspect of Phantom, or your answers to questions you read here. We'll print your answers and ideas in the letters section.

- Tonia Wand: 1) What star sign would Erik be? I think Scorpio would suit him - what do others think?
2) How many members does PAS have?
3) In the Leroux novel, when Erik comes into Christine's bedroom the day after he has first taken her to his home, he reproaches her for "not having finished dressing for that time of day". What are other people's thoughts on this - has Erik undressed her when she was asleep?? She was fully dressed when abducted and does not go to the bathroom until Erik has left.
4) In Susan Kay's version, we find out that Christine has Erik's child. As Erik had suffered a supposedly bad heart-attack just before Christine arrives to see him for the final time, I was left wondering how their union was consummated - or is this getting too pornographic??
5) Can you give me more details on how to get the Clive Barda photos you advertised in Issue 5?

Right! 1) Personally I think Gemini suits him, maybe with a bit of Scorpio. C"E"K worked out that from Susan Kay's dates and descriptions he was probably born mid-June. Star sign descriptions seem to vary with different books, but if we have any zodiac experts out there, send your suggestions.

2) We print 200 copies. There are around 100 members, but we sell copies through Avon Boutique in Canada, are going to start selling them through Dress Circle, and send some to leading cast, ALW etc, and we have a few over each time for back copies. So we're read by about 175 fans world-wide now, and we get more inquiries all the time.

3) At first I thought that Leroux wasn't that pedantic or it referred to Christine still being in costume from when she was abducted, but I've recently read Lowell Bair's translation, which says "washing and grooming" rather than dressing. I consulted the French edition, and that's a more accurate translation. Incidentally, the new translation, published by Bantam in the US, contains some passages, mostly reviews, that are left out of most editions. One passage refers to Carlotta's days singing in seedy clubs! The description of when Carlotta croaks has about two pages that are usually left out, which builds the tension far more effectively than the translations usually published. If you see this edition anyway, I recommend it.

4) Do you think Erik would turn down a chance like that for anything? I think we can safely leave this to the imagination, but I'm sure he managed not to exert his heart too much. Or maybe that's what finished him off! (Sorry Erik..!)

5) You can write to Clive Barda at 50 Agate Road, LONDON, W6 0AH, UK, saying you're interested in Phantom photos. Enclose an SAE/IRC. You'll be sent a price list - they're not cheap. You have to specify what shots you want, but there are no proofs to choose from, so you have to hope they know what shot you mean.

Amanda: Why is it that the Phantom sometimes sings "slave of fashion" and sometimes "slave of passion"?

I think they forget their words. Or possibly it's a lyric change that some use, some don't. I've never heard that one, but I do notice some sing "Fathering" and some "Far-reaching" in the Graveyard scene, as that's a lyric that's changed in some productions.

A fan from Michigan: Is Peter Karrie married and does he have any kids?

Yes. Peter's married to Jane, and he has six children.

Sharon Taylor: Have you seen the 1995 Phantom calendar? Are there any photos of Anthony Warlow or Simon Burke in it?

Yes, and no. The photos are all UK ones, so no Anthony. I didn't notice Simon Burke, but C"E"K was with me and she'd definitely have noticed him. The pics are Michael Crawford, Peter Karrie (back cover) and Dave Willetts (Angel Scene). We don't actually get the calendar over here, but Dress Circle sometimes have a few in and Avon Boutique sell them. Dave fans, that shot of Dave on the angel is GORGEOUS and I haven't seen it before except in the Manchester Gala brochure. The front cover looks to me and CK like Peter Polycarpou but Peter Karrie thought it was him and I didn't have time to examine it closely.



By Chris Davis
(see ad)

REVIEWS

We're making this section reviews of Phantom stars on CD, in other shows, or Phantom-related books. If you don't see your favourite Phantom star's album reviewed, then write one and send it in! Most of the CDs reviewed on this page are available from Dress Circle, 57/59 Monmouth Street, London WC2H 9DG. Phone 071 240 2227 / 071 836 8279, or fax 071 379 8540. They do mail order overseas, and accept credit card orders.

CDs:

Theatrically Yours - Peter Karrie. Leading lady - Claire Moore. CD and cassette.

Reviewed by CD.

Well, I bet no one can guess what I'm going to say about this - yes, it's the best solo album I've ever heard. Peter's voice just gets better and better. His Music of the Night is unequalled - no one soars like him, certainly no one "be"s like him. He has the most terrific range and feeling I've ever heard; he soars to the highest notes with ease, and holds them seemingly forever. He can be deafeningly powerful at the end of one verse, and purringly soft and seductive at the start of the next. He's brilliant. Claire Moore is an excellent choice as the leading lady, and Peter has a backing group and the Bridgend and District Male Voice Choir (he's their patron) on the album too.

Peter told us about the songs on the CD in our interview with him last issue, so I won't list them. Some of the arrangements are so different to the ones I knew they took a bit of getting used to, such as "Pride and Prejudice", but after a few listenings I loved them too. And I'd recommend getting the album just for "No Man" from Shogun, which sends shivers down my spine and has become my favourite song on the CD. The three songs from Chess are fantastic too, really showing the incredible power of Peter's wonderful voice. "Pity the Child" had me in tears. Bernard J Taylor, composer of "Pride and Prejudice", said that he thinks Peter's renditions of "Bring Him Home" from Les Mis and the "Anthem" from Chess are the best he's ever heard (amazingly enough, I agree!).

The CD/tape insert has some delicious photos in it too, though some of the sleeve notes are totally illiterate.

Well, I could write about how stunning Peter's voice is for pages, but I won't. Let me just say that if you only buy one CD in the rest of your life, make it this one...

CK's opinions of this CD will appear in the next issue.

Corner of the Sky - Peter Cousens. Reviewed by Amanda.

Before I begin, I have to compliment Peter for avoiding falling into the trap that so many other Phantom stars fall into - making every second song one from Phantom. He does sing one song from the show - yep, you guessed it, "All I Ask of You" a la Barbra Streisand except, I'm happy to say, he does a much better job of it. My favourite song would have to be "Old Friend" from "Getting My Act Together and Taking It on the Road". It is a poignant song, sung with the sensitivity it deserves.

He does a few standards - all of which I think have been overdone recently - including "You'll Never Walk Alone" which is the worst song on the album and, I feel, quite boring. But don't let that dissuade you, it's a great debut album and well worth a look.

Boulevard Der Sehnsucht - Uwe Kröger, songs by Michael Kunze and Sylvester Levay. Reviewed by C"E"K.

Good reasons to include the debut solo album of Uwe Kröger in the PAS magazine... Michael Kunze, co-writer of the songs, translated Phantom into German. And Uwe is on my list of "people I'd like to see play the Phantom". If his voice was right for it, the rest would fall into place. He has the eyes and facial expressions, he can do the stances and the gorgeous hand movements. Moments in "Elisabeth" show he has to be seen to be believed!

The album is all in German, and called "Boulevard of Yearning". The music is spot-on all through, Kunze and Levay are a stunning pair of songwriters. My favourites are "Ich Denk an Dich" (I Think of You), and "Leibe, Geld und Rock 'n' Roll" (Love, Money and R 'n' R). I recommend this to anyone who wants to expand their knowledge of different musical stars, and don't forget to buy "Elisabeth" while you're at it! (*Elisabeth was reviewed in the last issue.*)

Other albums recently released: "Songs From A Journey" by Dodie Pettit; "Always" by Cris Groenendaal; "Re-collected Mark Wynter - Lookin' For Me" (to be reviewed in the next issue).

PLAYS:

The Life of the World to Come, starring Simon Burke, written by Rod Williams. Reviewed by C"E"K.

Simon plays Steve Arbeit, president of New Hope Life Extension, who has been diagnosed as suffering from leukaemia and has been cryogenically frozen as a result, awaiting such time as a cure is discovered. Unluckily the people in power are doing it for the money and only the Doctor is looking for a way of "defrosting" the patients.

Simon only appears in the first act as a dummy (made my Madame Tussauds). Looking at this dummy gives an idea of the life of the PLAY to come - the dummy is naked. Why can't people be frozen with their clothes on? Because it would stick, apparently.

The Doctor thaws Steve at the end of the first act, and the second begins with Simon running on. It says a lot for the quality of both the acting and writing of this play that your attention is drawn away from Simon's nakedness! I have to say Simon have guts to play this part, most brave! (*Especially with his fans in the audience...CD*)

As a role it goes to show that Raoul's actors are capable of much more. However, the Managers' comment of "He must have been with her" probably holds true. After seeing "...World to Come" I see why Christines ran off with *this* Raoul!! (Hello Simon! Couldn't resist that comment!) (*But hey, Simon played opposite Peter Karrie...oh, alright, I'll shut up...CD*)

The play is a futuristic comedy and has some hilarious lines, though the content is extremely serious. I did think the swearing was over the top at times, too many F***s in it which they could have avoided. The poor man is killed off in the end by the evil people in power, and Simon gets dragged back on. All in all a brilliant play and well worth seeing when it reaches the West End.

BOOKS:

Phantoms of the Opera - The Face Behind the Mask, by John L Flynn.

Reviewed by CD.

Many thanks to Belinda Burgin Brill for sending this over from the US for me, where it is published by Image Publishing.

This book studies the various portrayals of Erik in different versions of Leroux's novel. There is a lot of detail and excellent research in the section on the films, and this is certainly a book every Phantom fan would find interesting. There's a section on the ALW musical of course, and other stage versions, though not the Kopit/Yeston show which was staged too late for inclusion. There are some wonderful photos (black and white) and film stills too. Those interested in the films will find this book invaluable.

However, I do have some criticisms. Given the detail of the research on the films, I was surprised that there was no mention of the Paris Opera House's 1980 ballet version, and I found a few other omissions. I also came across the odd error of fact, and I strongly disagree with the author's judgement on some of the films - okay, this is a personal thing, but can you really say that the Robert Englund film contains "all the key elements which made GL's novel and enduring classic have been lovingly created" or that Englund's Phantom is "a thoroughly convincing" character? I think not. And I actually quite like the film. On the other hand I agree totally with Flynn's low view of the Maximillian Schell version.

A few things irritated me in his piece on the ALW show. He mentions a few Phantoms other than Crawford (including someone called Colm Wilkerson, which was another irritating error!), but not Peter Karrie which is totally irrelevant to most people but pisses me off so I'm going to mention it anyway. He seems to think FAUST shouldn't have been dropped, but Lloyd Webber wanted to write an original score not a Ken Hill version, so of course Faust had to go. However, Flynn says that he can't understand why the show refers to Erik as a genius is everyone in it feels his Don Juan is "a lamentable mess". This doesn't show very deep thought about the show. Erik is a composer ahead of his time, writing music that is too advanced for the managers, Carlotta etc to understand because they can only relate to the 19th c. opera that they know. Mr Flynn should cast his mind back to the passage in Leroux where Erik displays his contempt for the type of opera Christine knows. Of course his music won't be understood by those in the opera who don't have music in their soul, it is a reflection in a way of him - misunderstood because it's different.

Despite my criticism of certain sections of this book, it is worth buying, and is a very informative read.

OTHER THINGS:

Phantom Notes, edited by Jenn Bills. Reviewed by CD.

You're probably wondering why I'm reviewing another Phantom fanzine... Phantom Notes was the US Phantom fanzine, which ran for six years. All the issues can be bought from Avon Boutique, so, since I've pinched some of their ideas in this issue, I thought I'd review the publication.

Phantom Notes is mostly made up of letters from fans around America, Canada and some from Europe and other places. Most British fans won't know many of the casts mentioned, though there's a lot about Dave Willetts in it. Of course I have my usual complaint of not enough Peter Karrie, but with so few contributions from Britain that's not surprising. There are also some wonderful stories and amazing artwork and cartoons in it.

I noticed, reading it, that the American fans seem to interpret much more of the show than we do over here, and read much more into the staging and lyrics. There were times when I thought some people over-interpreted, like a reader who read great meaning into Peter K catching Christine in Toronto, when he does that because that's what they all do here. On the other hand, I found myself thinking about aspects and details of the show I'd never considered before, and it was interesting to discover the differences between the US and UK productions.

For American fans who want to know more about casts they've seen than we can give them, Phantom Notes is invaluable. For other fans, it's also pretty invaluable... I personally can never read enough about the show and story, and 12 issues of fans' observations is wonderful, especially when I don't have to type them!

HET SPOOKT VAN DE OPERA:

The Background to the Netherlands production

By Christine "Engel" Karrie

The Dutch Phantom opened at the VSB Circustheater on August 15th 1993. The theatre dates back to 1904 and was Europe's first theatre to feature electric lighting. It has been completely renovated under the supervision of architect Arno Meijjs.

One of the new foyers has been named after Lloyd Webber (the other is Gershwin). The Lloyd Webber is suited to receptions for 700 - 900 people; for dinner parties it seats 400, but in combination with the Restaurant Christine (yes, seriously!) the capacity is expanded to 530.

As well as a Restaurant Christine there is a Restaurant Raoul. The decor of both the restaurants evoke the atmosphere of the musical, chandeliers included. I would imagine the napkin rings disappear at the end of each meal, as they're black with the mask and rose logo. The menus also have the logo on.

The theatre hall seats 1750 people; the central part was formerly a circus ring and seats 500. It really is a gorgeous building, and the auditorium is wonderfully spacious - comfy red seats and NO PILLARS!

The cast on the opening night were Henk Poort, Joke de Kruijf and Peter de Smet. Henk Poort was born in Amsterdam in 1956. He has worked mainly in opera, but played Valjean in the Dutch Les Mis. Joke de Kruijf played Cosette opposite him. She was also born in Amsterdam, in 1965, and she has played Christine many times in the German and Austrian productions. Peter de Smet was born in Ghent in 1957. He is a prominent vocal coach and teacher at the Conservatory of Antwerp. He has also been in Les Mis.

The major alternates are Ben Cramer for "Spook" and Els Bongers for Christine. Ben is a popular figure in the Dutch light music scene. Els made her musical theatre in Phantom (she also plays the Hannibal Princess).

I would like to thank the VSB Circustheater for supplying all the information.

These Things Do Happen...

From Cathy Cormany: When my sister Cindy worked as an usher at the Ahmanson during Michael Crawford's first run, she observed what she surmised to be an "alternative ending" to the show.

Meg, played by Elisabeth Stringer, didn't remove the Phantom's cloak but merely knelt down beside the throne with a ceiling-ward glance on her doll-like face as the narrowing spotlight dimmed to black. It wasn't till later in the evening when Cindy learned the change was entirely unintentional and improvised by desperation. It seems the latch operating the throne got stuck! Michael managed to shut off his microphone, and as Elisabeth approached she heard the panicked whisper "I'm still HERE!" Thus, she ad-libbed to the extent that a regular usher thought it was a deliberate change. Are these actors brilliant or what?

From Amanda: In the second act when the boat came on, the Phantom didn't have his pole. Instead, he waved his arms around in magnificently theatrical gestures. Rob Guest told me that they simply couldn't find it and hoped no one noticed!

From Robyn Paul: When I was in Toronto, they closed the Masquerade curtains too late, and while Raoul was asking Mme Giry about the Phantom, you could see them starting to take apart the staircase.

From Sonja Wagner: Four things - 1) the Phantom's microphone doesn't work at the beginning of the scene in Christine's dressing room, and "Insolent boy" can hardly be heard. 2) The end of the Punjab lasso around Raoul's neck doesn't stay in the air, so he has to hold it up himself. 3) Only one of the flares at the end of the Mausoleum scene works, the rest fail. 4) The Phantom fails to disappear at the end - Meg (Marina Stephenson) realizes and takes Christine's veil instead of the mask. (The only pity about it: most people will think Erik has died at the end...)

From Marion "Mellow" Middleton: 1) On the command ".....illumination, gentleman!" the chandelier stopped half way up to the ceiling. 2) Christine (Renee Knapp) had to kiss the Phantom (Simon Tunkin) more than normally because her wig was stuck on the buttons of his suit, and Tunkin nearly ripped her wig off. 3) Christine (Colby Thomas) had a microphone defect, and could only be heard when she moved near Meg or Raoul. 4) On André's first appearance he stood behind Lefevre and too close to the orchestra pit. Lefevre made a quick turn and André's hat fell into the pit; a voice said "Ah!" and straight away the hat flew on the stage again.

From Andrea Stephenson and Kathryn Bell: Someone backstage left a cupboard door open which Simon Green fell over and broke his wrist when he came off after Masquerade. Alan Rice sang the second managers' scene duet on his own until Simon came back on.

Magic in Box 5

By Jeanette Birt

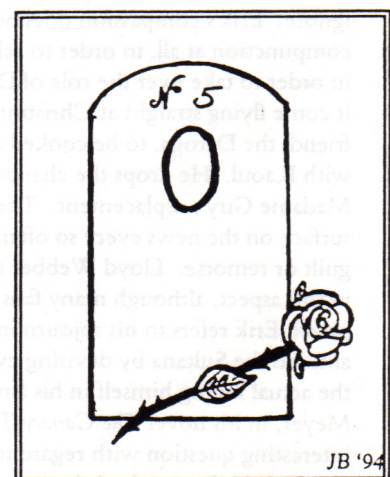
When I first heard from the Phantom Appreciation Society that there was to be an exhibition at the Paris Opera based on the novel by Gaston Leroux "Le Fantome de l'Opera", I could hardly contain my excitement! I made enquiries with Paris Travel Service, and they confirmed with their Paris office that there was indeed an exhibition scheduled to take place between June and October, so I booked my tickets to travel to Paris and started to count the weeks, then the days. Some time later, however, I heard from Christine that two members of PAS had just returned from a visit to the Opera House and could find no trace of a Phantom Exhibition. "Oh no", I thought, "am I heading for a big disappointment?"

I arrived in Paris on 26 August, and was up bright and early next morning to spend the day wandering around that beautiful city and drinking in all the sights and sounds, feeling on top of the world. My first stop, of course, was the Opera House. As I came up the stairs from the Metro and saw that wonderful building in front of me, a feeling of pure happiness washed over me - it was almost like coming home. I was about to enter Erik's domain once again. I paid my francs and went in, standing for some time just looking at that magnificent marble staircase and the entrance hall, lit by hundreds of sparkling candles. Then I started off on my quest for the Phantom Exhibition - was it on or was it not? I went exploring first, looking in every place that is open to the public and marvelling at the sumptuous rooms upstairs, then going down some very spookily-lit stairs to the huge, mirrored rotunda. I then went back upstairs to the Museum (which I'd saved until last, thinking that any exhibition would be held in there). There was indeed a display called Un Bal Masque, which was quite enthralling but it was NOT to do with the masked ball in Gaston's book where the Phantom attended as Red Death. I managed to ask (all in my schoolgirl French) if there was a Phantom exhibition but was told "non parfait, parce-que problem avec Bal Masque" or words to that effect. I was so sad that all my hopes of seeing something of Erik's story actually being displayed in his domain were not to be.

Slowly, I made my way up to Box 5 and, standing on tiptoe, peered into the darkness through a small round window placed high up in the locked door, where only a glimmer of light from the auditorium outlined the velvet-covered chairs and the heavy curtain behind which Erik used to view his beloved opera. As I stood there, all on my own, the distant hum of voices and the sound of footsteps of the many visitors to the Opera House faded into nothing, and I was lost in dreams. After a while, I became aware of a man's voice singing in my head, faintly at first, then gradually filling my senses with wonder. It was the voice of the Angel of Music, who had so enchanted Christine Daae all those years ago, and now he was singing for me. I felt a gentle touch on my hair, and then a cool hand rested lightly on the nape of my neck. Somehow I was inside Box 5. My eyes filled with tears as Erik sang to me, and when his song was over, his voice, so deep and soft, whispered my name. Through my tears I saw the outline of his mask shimmering in the velvety darkness. "Do not cry, ma petite. Your Erik is here with you. Tell all your friends who love me that I am here, and always will be - the Opera is my resting place but I will never die. I will fill your hearts and your minds with my music for as long as you go on loving me. Jeanette, my love, come back to me here again, and I will find you." The touch of his hand on my neck turned to a caress, and I felt his lips brush my own.

"Remember, my little one, that I love you." I reached out to touch him and I was held in his strong arms... Then he was gone, back into the darkness, but always in my heart. I turned slowly, reluctantly, to go and it was then that I found a rose, a perfect red rose still sprinkled with iridescent dewdrops, in my hands. As I lifted the rose to breathe in its glorious perfume, music once again filled my mind, and unable to see for the tears that filled my eyes and spilled over, I stumbled to a dimly-lit alcove and sat there, vaguely aware of the many visitors to the Opera but not really seeing them as I relived my heartbreakingly wonderful experience. I sat there for a long Time dreaming of the Phantom and the man behind the mask, the sweet scent of my rose filling the air. At last, my tears were replaced by a feeling of overwhelming happiness, and I left my alcove and once more, I walked around my beloved Erik's palace. I slowly made my way down that magnificent staircase and went out into the warm sunshine of Paris. I turned to look at the Opera House basking in the bright day, and whispered "Au revoir - I will be back soon."

Now I am back home again with my photographs of the Phantom's domain to dream over, and the soft petals of a beautiful red rose to treasure. Dearest Phantom of the Opera, I will love you forever and ever.



The Original Phantom

By Carrie Hernandez

I have been fascinated for some time now by the Phantom of the Opera. It was, of course, the musical by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber which got me started, but soon I discovered that it was the character himself which most piqued my curiosity. I have since viewed every video and read every book, newsletter and fanzine I could find. I think what I admire most now is Gaston Leroux himself who was able to create a character so intriguing that nearly one hundred years later, people are still trying to explain him, reinterpret him and pretend that he actually did exist. As yet, no one seems to have been able to reproduce him accurately in all of his many facets, though Susan Kay seems to have come the closest in her novel *Phantom*.

When talking to "phellow phans," I have discovered that many people find that Erik's devotion to Christine is the quality which makes him most attractive, though many people (including Leroux) also mention his genius as being his most redeeming quality. Both of these attributes are present in the Lloyd Webber musical and despite his numerous negative qualities, he is seen by most as a desirable phantom. I think however, that this is just one aspect of a very deep character and in order to form an accurate picture of the Phantom that Leroux intended, one must also examine his other qualities. Apparently, Leroux wanted Erik's physical aspect to be as horrible as possible. I suppose each of us has our own thoughts on the exact physical characteristics which we would find most revolting, but for Leroux, the most frightening look he could think of was that of the animated corpse. Remember that the abnormalities of the Leroux Phantom do not stop at his face. He even smells of death, which means, dear reader, rotting carrion. For a first-hand experience of the smell in question, try wrapping a nice chunk of raw meat in some plastic and leave it in a warm place for a week or two. Unwrap that and take a whiff and you'll have some idea of what Christine suffered the first time Erik covered her mouth with his hand. As if that weren't enough, Christine further describes his touch as being cold and bony. If a partially deteriorated corpse in the morgue were to rise up and wrap its hand around your wrist you could at that point (if you were still conscious) comprehend the shock Christine felt when after walking through the mirror in her dressing room and finding herself in total darkness, Erik took hold of her wrist to guide her. In fact, there is absolutely *nothing* physically beautiful about Leroux' Phantom (even if he did have a talent for clothing himself in a dashing manner). He was created to be as repulsive as possible. If Christine were to consent to be his wife, no matter how much she loved the inner man, it would still mean that physically she would have to lie down in the embrace of what would, to all intents and purposes, be a corpse in the ripest stage of putrefaction and to submit to performing the most intimate sexual acts with said partner on a regular basis.

If she could at least learn to control the old gag reflex, you might think that Christine would still be wise in choosing Erik over Raoul. In the musical, we feel that Erik is, at the very least, concerned with Christine's welfare. Even in the Leroux version, he has gone to the trouble of setting up a bedroom for her and has obviously taken great pains to please her (this detail appears in the Lon Chaney version as well). Furthermore, he forgives her countless times. He forgives the unmasking; he forgives her each time she betrays him. He is human of course. He does become angry, sometimes dangerously so, but he never causes her physical damage. The worst he ever does is pull her hair. Most importantly, he never forces himself upon her sexually, though she is most certainly at his mercy. All of this is to his credit of course, and his supporters out in "phandom" will quickly point this out.

There is another very important aspect to his character however, which most of us seem to try very hard to ignore. Erik's compassion does not extend very far past Christine. He is willing to sacrifice anyone else with no compunction at all, in order to achieve what he desires. Examples from the musical include his strangling of Piangi in order to take over the role of Don Juan as well as the dropping of the chandelier (was it my imagination, or does it come flying straight at Christine?). The novel, of course, is even worse. Erik is perfectly content to allow his friend, the Daroga, to be cooked alive in the torture chamber just because he was unfortunate enough to be there with Raoul. He drops the chandelier on innocent people because he wants to get rid of the woman chosen as Madame Giry's replacement. The feeling I get from Leroux' Erik is the same I get from these serial killers which surface on the news every so often. They can maim, mutilate and commit unspeakable acts without any feeling of guilt or remorse. Lloyd Webber only hints at this. The Robert Englund version, I think, came closer to the mark in this aspect, although many fans objected very strenuously to this interpretation. Remember, in the Leroux novel, Erik refers to his sojourn in Persia as the "Rosy hours of Mazenderan." This was the epoqe in which he amused the Sultana by devising ever more diabolical ways to put people to death. On occasion, he would even do the actual killing himself in his famous demonstrations of his expertise in the use of the Punjab Lasso. Nicholas Meyer, in his novel *The Canary Trainer*, seems to be very aware of this aspect of Erik. His version suggests an interesting question with regard to the Phantom's lack of remorse. How long would Christine really be safe? Sherlock Holmes, who is investigating the mysterious case of the Phantom of the Opera states at one point:

"In my experience of human nature...devotion so intense as that which Nobody (the Phantom) feels for Mademoiselle Daae is usually separated by a hair from its opposite." (Meyer, pg. 135)

This brings us then, to the relationship between Erik and Christine. It is unclear exactly why he chose her out of all the other women at the opera house, though perhaps as others have suggested, he may not have had a choice. It could have simply been something that happened to him. The attraction seems to be partially due to her voice which, in almost every version since Leroux's, has been portrayed as something super extraordinary. It is possible

that this recognition of a fellow talent, so like his own, attracted Erik despite himself. At first he tried to help her bring forth that talent which he recognized immediately, but which others less astute had totally mislaid. In trying to find a way to work with her without frightening her, he came up with the idea of appearing to her as a disembodied voice. Christine herself put the icing on the cake by asking him if he were the Angel of Music her father had promised to send her. Christine says:

"It was certainly the fault, at least in part, of my adopted mother from whom I hid nothing of this inexplicable phenomenon. She was the first to say 'It must be the angel; in any case, you can always ask him.' This I did, and the man's voice responded that in effect, it was the voice of the angel my father had promised at his death and for whom I had been waiting. From that moment on, there was a great intimacy between us and I trusted the voice implicitly." (Leroux pg. 226)

Erik eagerly adopted this explanation for the existence of the Voice and even built upon it. Christine continues:

"It told me that it had descended to Earth to help me experience the supreme delights of the eternal art, and it asked my permission to give me music lessons every day." (Leroux pg. 226)

Christine, then, felt she was receiving visitations from an angel. She felt she was in the throes of a holy experience and must have treated the voice with the utmost respect. In addition, as time went on, his kind but strict ways engendered in her the desire to please him. Her treatment of him at this point must have been completely unprecedented from his point of view. A perfect example of her devotion was overheard by Raoul whilst eavesdropping outside Christine's dressing room after her first triumph as Marguerite. Erik said:

"Christine, you must love me.

"And the trembling voice of Christine answered in a tone so filled with pain that it must have been accompanied by tears, 'How can you say that to me *when I sing only for you?!...*'

"The man's voice spoke again, 'Are you very tired?'

"Oh, this evening, I gave you my soul and I am dead.'

"Your soul is very beautiful, my child,' said the man's deep voice, 'and I thank you. No emperor ever received such a gift! Tonight, the angels cried.'" (Leroux, pg. 50)

For the man who had received nothing but abuse all his life, the respect and affection with which she treated him could hardly have failed to make a tremendous impression.

I cannot help wondering if Leroux' Erik would ever have had the courage to reveal himself to Christine at all if he had not been motivated by the threat of losing her when Raoul came into the picture. The point is moot

however, for threatened he was and so, he spirited Christine away in an act of pure desperation. For a man who spent years planning and creating a home and secret passageways within the Paris Opera House, it seems very out of character for him to abduct and physically carry off a struggling woman. This change in his usually cautious nature shows just how frightened he has become. Here is Christine's account of the abduction:

"And suddenly, out of the darkness, a hand covered mine... or perhaps it would be better to say that something bony and cold closed around my wrist and wouldn't let me go. I screamed. An arm imprisoned my waist and I was lifted off my feet... I struggled for a moment in terror; my fingers slid along the wet stones of the wall without finding purchase. It was then that I gave up the fight, thinking that I would not survive the horror of that moment... I made one final effort. I braced my legs and opened my mouth in order to shriek out my fear, but a hand closed it, a hand which I could feel upon my lips, upon my flesh... And it smelled of death! I fainted." (Leroux, pg. 235)

Lloyd Webber's Phantom seems to be much less desperate and much more



V E Steele

in control of himself when he takes Christine the first time. His is more a seduction than an abduction, exciting and mysterious, but hardly terrifying. The Lon Chaney version of the abduction seems to be much more faithful to the original.

Looking at Leroux' Phantom in his entirety, I can't but wonder how many of us would really have chosen Erik over Raoul. Those in the Christine-bashing department would do well to remember that she *did* choose the Phantom in Leroux' novel. In Erik's own words:

"Christine came to me, her big beautiful blue eyes opened wide and she swore to me, upon her eternal salvation, that she consented *to be my living wife!* Up until then... in the depths of her eyes... I had always seen my dead wife. That was the first time that I had seen *my living wife*. She meant it with all her heart for she had sworn upon her eternal salvation." (Leroux, pg. 478)

Even after Christine could have no doubt as to Erik's mentality and his indifference to the lives of others, indeed after he had very nearly killed the man she loved, she still found it in her heart to pity and to comfort him. Erik said:

"I fell weeping at her feet... and I kissed them, those tiny feet, weeping all the time. She was crying too... The angel cried..."

"I felt her tears flow down my forehead... They were hot... they were sweet! Her tears streamed under my mask! They mingled with my own tears... They rolled down into my mouth... Oh! Her tears upon me! I tore off my mask so I would not lose a single one of her tears... And she did not run away!... And she did not die!... While I was still at her feet, I heard her say '*Poor, unhappy Erik!*' and she took my hand!" (Leroux, pp. 480-481)

Here is where Meyer's and Englund's versions are radically different from the original. Their Phantoms view Christine as an object, rather than as a person and this tender scene is completely missing. From this moment on however, Christine is no longer the obsession of Leroux' phantom. She is his love. He thinks for the first time of her happiness and would rather die himself than see her suffer. Erik says:

"She understood then that I was nothing but a dog ready to die for her and that she could marry her young man whenever she wished because she had cried with me. When I said this to her it was as if I were calmly slicing my heart to pieces, but she had cried with me... and she had said '*Poor, unhappy Erik!*'" (Leroux, pg. 481)

Lloyd Webber knew the power of *this* scene. And although the dialogue was changed, the essence remains in the final "lair" scene. Without a doubt, this humanization of Erik is what touches us all at the end of the musical. I am not certain that Leroux ever expected his readers to fall in love with the creature he had created. I almost get the feeling that although he obviously pined for Erik, he was not certain that he had conveyed the point satisfactorily to his readers, for he felt it necessary to add in an epilogue:

"Poor, unhappy Erik! Should we pity him? Should we curse him? He only wanted, as we all do, to be somebody. But he was just too unsightly. And he had to either hide his genius or *use it to play tricks with*. Had he been born normal, he would have been one of the noblest members of the human race! His heart was big enough to contain the entire empire of the world, yet in the end, he had to be content with a cellar. Without a doubt then, we must pity the Phantom of the Opera."

A great deal of credit goes to Lloyd Webber for recognizing the potential of this character to captivate the imagination of so many. Still, there is a limit to how much people will forgive in a character, no matter how pitiable. I feel it was wise of Lloyd Webber to tone down the murderous, amoral side of his Phantom as well as the *grossness* of his abnormality in order for people to find it within themselves to forgive him (and to forgive themselves for finding him attractive). After all, how hard is it to fall in love with Michael Crawford in all his phantomly splendor? The question is, how many of us, if put in Christine's place, would have felt the same way about the real Phantom, rotten stench and all, dragging us kicking and screaming into the bowels of the Earth?

Quotations from:

Leroux, Gaston, *Le Fantome de L'Opera*. Paris, France: Brodard et Taupin, Le Livre de Poche, 1959. (Translations are my own. CH)

Meyer, Nichols, *The Canary Trainer*, First Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1993.

DEADLINES

We have no set deadlines for contributions. We aim to publish BTM at the end of September, December, March, and June. We therefore need pieces by about two weeks before the end of these months.

PHANTOM PROFILES

In response to various requests, we'll be doing short profiles of some of the leading Phantoms over the next few issues. This issue, the first two Phantom to grace the West End...

MICHAEL CRAWFORD: Born Michael Dumbell-Smith on 19 January 1942. Became a choirboy at St Paul's Cathedral. First starring role at age of 11, in school production of Britten's "Let's Make an Opera". He went on to perform in some 22 stage plays, 15 films and 30 television programmes. Until Phantom, Michael was best known in the UK for the comedy series "Some Mothers Do Have 'Em", and for his role in "Barnum". Lloyd Webber heard him singing when he picked Sarah Brightman up from a singing lesson, and approached him about the role. Michael is said to have practised his singing for five hours a day while preparing for the role. Lloyd Webber clearly made the right decision - the critics, as usual, managed to be rude about the content of the show and the music, but gave rave reviews to Michael's performance.

Michael took the show to Broadway and LA, and then toured with the Music of ALW. Next year he will star in "EFX" in Las Vegas. Michael is divorced, and has two daughters.

Recordings include: 3 best-selling solo albums, OLC Phantom, Barnum, Billy, Flowers for Algernon.

Fan club: MCIFA, 7605 Santa Monica Boulevard, Dept 644, West Hollywood, CA 90046, USA.

DAVE WILLETTTS: Born on 24 June 1952, Birmingham. Dave worked as a quality control engineer, performing in local amateur productions in his spare time. He was asked to audition for a professional production; a year after turning professional and with no professional training he was understudying Valjean in Les Mis in London, where (for obscure reasons) he was nicknamed Daisy. He took over from Colm Wilkinson in Les Mis, and then took over from Michael Crawford in Phantom. The curtain call on his first night in Phantom was broadcast live on the News at Ten.

Dave has since returned to Phantom many times, and has often played Valjean in Les Mis. He also created the role of Major Lee in "Someone Like You". Dave has had two concert tours of his own, and sung in many other concerts including a European tour of Jesus Christ Superstar, as Jesus. Future plans include possible productions of Flowers for Algernon and Jekyll and Hyde, and more recordings. Dave is married with two daughters.

Recordings include: 2 solo albums, Wuthering Heights, Les Mis concert album (with Claire Moore), Carousel (Pickwick recording). About to record Jesus on Symphonic JCS.

Fan club: Dave's Team, 17 Leyburn Gardens, Croydon, CR0 5NL, UK.

Can it Be Possible?

A poem dedicated to Peter Karrie.

Can it be possible?

This shy charmer you'd stroll right by on the street
Could be one you'd seen and heard before?

On a night your soul learned to soar,

Taught by an opera, hauntingly bittersweet.

Did those ice blue eyes

Hold yours captive?

Demanding your devotion,

Over-ruling any notion

You're merely indulging a musical treat.

From the moment that cloak floats to the floor

His composing hands are about your heart.

You've left the world you knew before,

For his presence is a world apart.

Reaching across the footlights ...

He calls to the ingenue

In each and all of you.

"Trust me and your star will shine bright."

But when the soprano fled like a child,

In the gown he'd crafted with care,

The grief we witness devours,

The cry of his soul too much to bear.

The Masquerade Monkey's all that's left to him,

As he conducts its melancholy song

Never knowing, that out where the lights dim,

There sits an empathy filled throng.

Wiping tears, they long to embrace him,

Giving the worship his elegance has earned.

Many who'd gone to the theatre on a whim,

Leave branded where his passion had burned.

So the next time you're out for a walk,

And with friends, indulge in small talk,

If there's a theatre you chance to pass by,

Give a second glance to the Welshman.

There's more there than meets the eye!

By C. Cornany.

★ GOSSIP ★

Bits and bobs about Phantom cast members - I hope the abbreviations of who they played are obvious to every one.

Rebecca Caine (Chr), Rosemary Ashe (Carl) and Simon Green (And) appeared in a concert performance of Show Boat in Scotland in June, while in Show Boat in Toronto we have Rebecca Luker and Mark Jacoby (Chr and Ph).

Radio 2 broadcasts recently have included Claire Moore (Chr) in Guys and Dolls, and Simon Green in Salad Days (also on CD).

Kevin Gray (Ph) stars in Miss Saigon in Toronto. There is talk of a symphonic album, like the Les Mis one, with Kevin as the Engineer. (So why don't they do a Phantom one??)

Colm Wilkinson (Ph) plans to tour with The Music of ALW II.

Anthony Warlow (Ph) won the highest award at the Australian "Mo" awards on June 14th (at Her Majesty's Theatre - Sydney). Marina Prior (Chr) and Rob Guest (Ph) also won awards at the evening. Anthony's fourth solo album has been recorded, and next year he performs in Gilbert and Sullivan's Patience. He has also recorded the lead on a double CD concept album of "Jekyll and Hyde", due for a January release, and may play the role on Broadway if the album is a success. (Report next issue.)

In July, Claire Moore performed the title role in Evita in Concert in Hungary. She is about to record Beatrice in Bernard J Taylor's new musical "Much Ado".

"One Careful Owner", Michael Ball's (Rl) latest album, went gold in two days... Michael's TV programme has been on again, and he has appeared on Pebble Mill and Masterchef.

Peter Cousens (Rl) has recently appeared on Good Morning Australia and Midday, and has performed in various concerts. His new album is getting good reviews... The day after it was launched, Peter's third daughter was born.

Simon Burke (Rl) appeared in Yusopov at the Sydmonoton festival. He is opening in "Out of the Blue" at the Shaftsbury Theatre in November. He appears on the Australian musicals CD "Once in a Blue Moon". He may have a song on "Much Ado" (see above).

Graham Bickley (Ph on CD) is Chris in Miss Saigon in London.

Marcus Lovett (Ph) stands by as Billy in Carousel. He filled in for Ed Fry in the CBS soap "As The World Turns" in August.

LE FIGARO Classified Advertisements

Looking for: People for punjab lasso practise. One time only. Prefer wrong-singing tenors, mediterranean divas or nosey scene-shifters. OG.

Giving away: French double bed.
Looking for: navy blue coffin. Raoul, Vicomte de Chagny.

To swap: L' Opera, for theatre de provence, without souterrain flat.
Monsieurs Firmin and Andre, Management.

Looking for: Voice coach, patient, for intonation of difficult phrases. Ubaldo Piangi.

Looking for: Wealthy and handsome monsieur, to get married. Meg Giry.

Looking for: The Angel of Music, haven't heard from him for 6 months. Christine Daaé.

Looking for: French double bed (to find the way to paradise). Giving away: Navy blue coffin, good condition, ideal for young nobleman. OG.

Text: Marion Middleton.

(Layout: CD)

Competition

We have two CDs to give away as the prizes for this issue's competition. Bernard J Taylor has generously given us one copy of Claire Moore's album of his songs, "Child of the Earth", and one copy of his latest recording "Pride and Prejudice" starring Claire Moore and Peter Karrie. Please say on your entry which you'd prefer, or if you already have one of them. We can't promise to give you the one you ask for, but we'll try. Just send us the answers, on a postcard or piece of paper, to the following questions, all Christine-based - first two correct entries out of the box on November 31st win.

- 1) Who took over from Sarah Brightman as Christine at Her Majesty's?
- 2) Which Christine started out as the first inkeeper's wife?
- 3) What does Christine wear round her neck in "Wishing"?

Last Issue's Results...

Thank you to the grand total of three people who entered last issue's competition... We asked you to think of your "Desert Island Discs" for characters from Phantom.

The Grand Winner, who wins a souvenir programme from London, signed by the leading cast members, is Emily Schuller from Ohio, USA. She tells us that in her research she read over 12,000 album titles finding ones that were fitting, and missed six meals... Her entry is too long to reprint it all, not to mention unsuitable for a family publication in parts!! Raoul's choices include "The Beavis and Butt-head Experience", and The "Hooked on Phonics" audio tapes, with the comment "How's he supposed to read dirty books if he's illiterate?" Yes, but how is he going to use a dictionary to work out what all those words mean??

Carlotta's choices include "I Just Wanna be Selfish", and her luxury is a Kareoke machine. Firmin's include "Where did the money go?". We are given two lots for Erik - Charles Dance's Erik and Susan Kay's. CD's Erik's include "Won't You Come and Sing For Me?" and "I'm Only Human", with the comment "Yes, sir, we've noticed, you make it far too obvious". Susan Kay's Erik takes, among others, "Before we were so rudely interrupted", with the comment "His life with Giovanni was quite enjoyable before Lucianna showed up...", and "One Night". All the rest of her choices were brilliant, and her comments were wonderful. Well done Emily!

Jenny Begg from MI, USA, gets a Phantom postcard because I loved her entry too. For Erik's Luxury she writes "Let's face it, Erik's no slob - I'd have to say a toilet", which I think would be mine too! Christine's luxury is "Raoul! Ha, ha." Cruel. Raoul's book is "The Little Engine that Could - he's not into big words". Snigger. Jenny also asks how Erik got to a desert island in the first place... He's magic, of course.

Kathryn "Firmin" Bell, from Cheshire, UK, gets something or other that I haven't yet decided for her efforts. She sent in a nice story which involves Raoul getting chainsawed, most of the cast being barbequed (nice, peace-loving girl, obviously), and Erik and Christine living happy ever after. She then provides a soundtrack to the story, which doesn't make much sense without the story so I won't reprint it. A few of the songs include "Stairway to Heaven - does Erik's bedroom have stars leading up to it?" Piangi's choices include "Swamp thing", relating to his girlfriend..., and "Don't Go Breaking My Windows - Carlotta and Piangi vocally warming up".

BACK ISSUES: UK: £1 each, incl. p&p. Europe: £1 plus 50p p&p per two issues. Overseas: £1 plus £1 p&p per two issues. So if you order one or two copies, add 50p or £1 p&p, if you order three or four add £1 or £2. etc. To get prices in US\$, multiply by 1.6. AUSS/CANS. x 2.1. Cheques to the PAS. Cash is accepted but sent at your own risk. Issues also available from Avon Boutique.

INDEX OF BACK ISSUES:

A guide to some of the key pieces in past issues.

- #1: The making of the Music of the Night model; the Phantom in print; latest on the film. 7 pages.
- #2: The Phantom on Stage; Phantom artwork; Merchandise. 10 pages.
- #3: Interview with Dave Willetts (2nd hand); Confessions of a Phantom Addict; Phantom on Film; Toronto show; fiction. 18 pages.
- #4: Interview with Susan Kay; Phantom recordings; Journey of a Phantom fan; Manchester review; fiction and poems. 20 pages.
- #5: Interview with Peter Karrie; Reviews; Survey results; Effects that never made it to the final show; lots of letters. 20 pages, but smaller print!

Here, I have a note...

Yes, we're copying "Phantom Notes" and using quotes from the show for more of our section headings. Please send in your letters on all and any Phantom topics - we'll assume anything you send it to be printed unless you make it clear it's for our eyes only. Thanks.

First, some letters addressing Lottie de Mercy's wicked cruel and horrible letter about Erik in the last issue. To those who asked for her address to send bombs to, sorry, but no - I'm leaving it to Erik to punish her as he sees fit...

From Andrea "I love Erik and think Raoul is slime" Stephenson, Cheshire, UK:

In reply to Lottie de Mercy's article I first of all suggest that this misguided person goes to see a psychiatrist. Secondly I'd like to say - LOOK, RAOUL IS A USELESS BORING IDIOT! Erik loved Christine with all his heart and soul and wanted to teach her to become a singer whose voice will be remembered forever. And slime (oops, I mean Raoul) can hardly even help himself half the time - I mean, when she's upset what does he do? Go "Christine, Christine" - I mean, does he think that that is really going to comfort her? And in the last scene would Raoul have any qualms about killing Erik if he got the chance? You bet he wouldn't. Erik goes and does what he thinks is best for Christine and lets her go free. He would never really harm Christine and if some of those other people had been a bit nicer towards him maybe he wouldn't have harmed them. Think of what Erik had to go through from being a child upwards. He didn't have the chance to sit in attics telling dark stories of the north or any other rubbish Raoul got up to as a child.

As for not seeing the light of day, I'd much rather have the Phantom's darkness of the music of the night any day. Erik has what Raoul sadly lacks - character, excitement, and definite sex appeal. Erik has more sex appeal in one finger than Raoul has in his whole body. I know for certain whose bed I'd rather be in, even if Erik's is a coffin. I don't ignore what Erik has done as you say we do, but I still adore him with all my heart and Erik, if you are out there listening, I certainly mean the bed comment. (*Don't we all...CD*) When Erik is in pain at the end you just want to reach out and hug him. Raoul being on the end of a rope is nowhere near as important for me (though I suppose it must be for him) as what Erik is going through.

I am perfectly willing to defend my views with anyone - also any fans of Erik or anyone else are welcome to write. I promise to reply to all letters, no matter how abusive they are! My address is Wenning, South Park Drive, Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1BS.

From Kathryn Firmin-Bell, Cheshire, UK:

AAARGH!!! Raoul is a moron, a totally insensitive dolt who has the charm, personality and sensuality of the limescale you find in the kettle. (*Bravo!*) He also has the intelligence of a paper chain. Erik, on the other hand - ♥ swoon ♥! Bitter? No, just head over heels. Old? Who cares? Obsessive? What's wrong with a bit of obsession? So he kills a few people - big deal. A scenery bloke and a lousy tenor. Anyone who tries to hang Raoul deserves a Blue Peter badge!

As for calling Erik a madman... He is artistic, beautiful and romantic. The only time he could be called a madman is when he let Raoul go! And another thing - I think the candlelight is very romantic and don't give a damn about daylight! Raoul is a creep, a slimeball and a dolt.

Note of explanation for overseas readers, because someone asked me to explain comments that you might not understand... Blue Peter is a kids' show where they get badges for good deeds etc.

From Emily Schuller, Ohio, US:

I have a few words for "Lottie de Mercy" - what the hell is your problem? What planet are you from? WHAT DO YOU MEAN? Erik does NOT just love Christine for her voice, he loves her as a person. I'm sure that if she lost her voice he'd still love her. And what do you mean by saying that Raoul loves Christine for herself? You're right that he doesn't give a hoot about her voice. He doesn't care about her, either, he just loves her body! If she got sick or something he'd be out of there before Christine would be able to blink. Now, Erik would stick by her through it all. And no, I would not like to see the light of day every once in a while. In the dark no one can see my pimples or how ugly I am. (*Except I've seen a photo of her and she isn't the least bit ugly, she could beat Kate Moss off the catwalk in a second.*) And the darkness is romantic. Erik is sensual, romantic, caring, loving, nurturing, handsome (look at the left side of his face!), sexy, mysterious, elegant, strong, brave, gentle, he respects women's rights, he's extremely musically gifted, he dresses well, he's a genius, he's interested in the arts, he writes good notes, he has good seats to the opera, he's very literate, he's got a great body, he's compassionate, understanding, imaginative, erotic, hypnotic, sensitive, articulate... you get the idea!

In the last issue you were asking about devotion to Phantom. Well, I won't have a tattoo till I'm 18, but last year there was a contest to win tickets to Phantom in Toronto. They were giving away 24 trips, 30 packages of Phantom stuff and 200 runners up prizes. I filled out a total of 423 entry forms. Due to time restrictions I could only turn in 237 of them, and I didn't win anything! And then there was the time I accidentally sprained my teacher's finger in defense of Erik (*how??*) and got suspended, and when I was up in Toronto with my school I put up with them laughing, talking etc through the whole performance, and I ended up punching a boy who called

Erik a queer because he'd been crying.

Didn't you guys say that Peter Karrie didn't answer his fan mail? Well, I got a response to the letter and birthday card I sent him. Only two sentences, but who cares - short but sweet. And he sent an autographed photo. I thought he was handsome, but he's much sexier than I realized!

A miracle, a miracle! I nearly fainted when I read this. What did you SAY to him when you wrote??? To be fair to Peter he did sign and return a programme I sent the first time I saw him, when I couldn't wait after the show. But a letter, a whole two sentences... Erik is watching over you. One day it'll be worth millions.

From Teresa Dunkin, WV, USA:

Thanks for your note and Issue 5 of "Beneath the Mask". I enjoyed reading the magazine very much, especially the interview with Peter Karrie, since I just saw him as the Phantom in Toronto. I like the new name very much. It is very appropriate since so many of the articles, letters etc. seem to deal with people's desire to see "beneath the mask", whether that be discussing Erik's life and motivation or the actors who play the part in the show. The artwork on the cover was beautiful and the whole issue was very interesting - keep up the great work!

You wrote that you wanted me to let you know how I liked Peter Karrie... First of all, I wasn't sure we were going to get to see him at all. We stopped by the gift boutique in the lobby both Friday and Saturday afternoons before the matinee show and both times there was a poster there announcing Cris Groenendaal was playing the part for the next shows. I know Cris does a great job with the part since I saw him last October, but I couldn't help being disappointed since I was **really** looking forward to seeing Peter Karrie after all the wonderful comments I had read about him. Unlike an understudy, Cris seems to fill in for extended periods, so I was sure Peter must be away for a number of performances. But, when we arrived at the Pantages on Saturday evening I was so thrilled to find the poster gone and no little white papers in the programme, so I knew we were to see Peter.

He was absolutely everything I had been lead to expect and more!!! I do have his "Beyond the Mask" concert tape so I knew that his voice would be wonderful, but his energetic and heart-rending acting combined with beautiful singing truly brought Erik to life for me. At the end of the show I was absolutely limp with emotion. I truly can't say enough about how fantastic his performance was. I had read so much in back issues of "Phantom Notes", which was published here in the USA, about how terrific Michael Crawford was in the part and have felt almost cheated not to have been in on all this at that time and missing the chance to see this man whom so many people seemed to feel was the "best" or "only" one to do justice to the Phantom. After seeing Peter I don't feel "cheated" at all any more. It was interesting to see that in your survey Peter Karrie came in as the favourite Phantom in the UK. I agree wholeheartedly with that!

From "Meg Giry", Germany:

I happened to discover "Beneath the Mask" (Issue Five) in Dress Circle, London - just before walking off to HM's to queue another time for a ticket last week. During the 3 1/2 hours of waiting, I really enjoyed reading it and was very confident to find out that there must be more "Phantomaniacs" like me - my friends already considering me crazy for not only queuing so long once, but meanwhile for the sixth time in London. (The other three times I saw the show at HM's I happened to get a ticket from the box office.)

Concerning the letters about the comparison of different Phantoms, I would like to add a "German" point of view.

The first time I saw the show was in Vienna. Although it was quite at the end of the production there (May 1993 - I had been waiting about 3 1/2 years for this opportunity), I was very lucky to see, no, to experience Alexander Goebel - who I thought I knew perfectly from the recording, but (of course) seeing him live on stage was something completely different. He's probably not so much an almost operatic singer as some other Phantoms, but the way he becomes Erik on stage seemed incredible to me.

Realizing that Phantom in Vienna was going to end only five weeks later, between my exams at university I returned there after four weeks to take my last chance. This time I saw Alfred Pfeifer (the Raoul on the Viennese recording) in the title role. He did well - especially sing in a more beautiful way than A. Goebel - but he didn't really touch me, he was not Erik. So I queued the next day for a standing, saw Alexander Goebel again and could enjoy it even more than the first time as I now knew there *are* real differences between the actors, and everyone will choose his/her personal favourite.

At the beginning of the year I went to Hamburg to see Simon Tunkin who was not bad - but I think it must be quite hard to perform this part in a language that is not your own. (I've read in the programme that he performed as well at HM's and would be very interested how he did there as I consider him as no bad actor.) The only thing that really annoyed me in Hamburg was the theatre which for me is no theatre (even less an opera house) at all, but just a huge stage with a lot of technical equipment...

Meanwhile I also had the opportunity to come to London and see the show in the "original" setting. To everyone who hasn't seen the show anywhere else than at HM's: you probably haven't realized yet how lucky you are to have this wonderful theatre! - But I wanted to compare the Phantoms. In London I have only seen Ethan Freeman until now - but his performance struck me so much that I simply "had" to see him again (and again, and again - nine times at the moment - then I had to leave to earn some money at home...). I've read with great interest the defending of Dave Willetts and Peter Karrie and I believe that they are great actors as well (although I have not seen them) - but I'd like to say that I fully agree with Christine Daa's opinion expressed in her article "An

understudy steps in": we should at least give everyone a chance.

(This concerns me as well, because I have to admit that I always went to the theatre begging: please, let it be Ethan Freeman again...)

The first thing I realized in his way of performing is the similarity to Alexander Goebel - no wonder, having been the "other ghost" in the production in Vienna, but this probably explains the differences to most of the other actors at HM's that many of you have noticed. I consider him a fantastic actor *and* singer - and having come home to Germany I hurried to buy the recording of "Elisabeth" (which is also recommended in Issue Five of BTM), although I was a bit afraid because of him singing in a foreign language. But it's not only a wonderful recording, showing what Ethan is capable of doing besides the Phantom - he also performs Luigi Lucheni without any English/American accent. I could hardly believe it is really him singing this part! Having looked around everywhere - is there any chance of finding any other recording of him in any other role? (*There is a CD called "Musicals - oh my God!" which features Ethan, and he is recording JCS and Grease for TER records. I don't know when they're out. - CD*)

From Sally Scheef, Illinois, USA:

I just received my first copy of *Beneath the Mask* and certainly enjoyed it. I do feel handicapped though. I have a case of late-onset Phantomania and saw the play for the first time only last summer - the evening before it closed in Chicago.

The Phantom was played by Chicago-born actor-singer-dancer Rick Hilsabeck, and I don't have much of an idea how he compares to any of the others. He sang well and had a good dancer's body, but I don't think he was personally mesmerizing. I was, however, so caught up in the whole performance, which - as you know - moves along at a break-neck pace that I hardly had time to notice the individual performances. It wasn't until a day or two had passed that I began to notice the symptoms: I bought the OLC, the Complete Phantom book, and the Leroux novel; I went to a close-by university library and looked up all the old reviews and articles from 1986 - '88; I ordered a couple of fanzines with Phantom stories.

I'm still feeling feversih, but I'm a teacher, and taking off on a weekend to see the show in New York or Toronto is prohibitively expensive in dollars, time and energy. My best friend and usual travelling companion is having financial difficulties so I can't count on her for sure, but I will go back to the Phantom's lair - Christmas vacation, Spring Break or next summer.

My researches and the various recordings I've bought have also made me into a pretty major Michael Crawford fan. Right on Margaret Uren and Gina LoBiondo! I sent in my money etc. to the fan club but haven't gotten anything back yet. They warned that it would take four to six weeks; I'm not sure why - twenty five bucks and a four to six week wait - Maybe Michael's delivering the packet himself. It looks as if I may have to plan a trip to Las Vegas as well if he is going to be appearing there, and Sunset Boulevard is opening soon. Do I need a second job to finance all of this? Perhaps I could start spooking around our local Paramount Theater and shake down the managers for a little travelling money.

From Catherine DeVine, Oxford, UK:

Thanks for my first issue of "Beneath the Mask", which I really enjoyed reading. I have to say that I agreed with every word of the letters from Rae Dunnill and Martin Conway. I've been a Phantom fan for a few years, and Ethan Freeman is by far the best Phantom I've seen. He has a stunning voice, and his acting is outstanding. I've never seen a Phantom who makes so much of the role. He seems to *become* Erik. He is so distraught when Christine first unmasks him I'm not sure he'll even start "Stranger" - I could swear he is really crying, really feeling every emotion he puts into it. He pounds the floor, he sobs, he's amazing. His Final Lair is beyond anything I've ever witnessed. I really don't think there could be a finer Phantom. Though I've enjoyed other portrayals, I don't think it'll be the same after Ethan.

Unfortunately times of trains means I've never got the chance to meet him, but I have to say that the picture in the programme is delicious. I say this because it reproduced so badly in the magazine, and I think Phantom fans should know it didn't do him justice! I strongly recommend that EVERY Phantom fan should see this man in action, because he is just so powerful, so... indescribable. And I think your magazine should have more about him!

On the rest of the magazine - I adored the cover, and am astounded that you even printed Lottie de Mercy's letter. She is obviously seriously ill and needs help. I hope that Erik will be merciful to her. She has obviously not seen Ethan as the Phantom or she'd never dare utter such comments.

I found the reviews very interesting too, and of course rushed out to buy "Elisabeth", which I think is great. I'd love to have a recording of Ethan singing a more Phantomy role, though I can hear his voice in my head for months after the performance anyway. I also agree with your review of Claire Moore's album - another not to be missed. I'm saving up for the other CDs reviewed, as after listening to "Child of the Earth" I'm anxious to hear more of Bernard J Taylor's compositions. I am now hoping that Ethan will be singing on his next!

From Cathy Comany, CA, USA:

This is an open letter to those phans who've enjoyed the Opera Ghost in all his interpretations and yet hold a private portal in their heart for one actor in particular whom they feel brings him to life the most vividly.

To say we love this show is redundant. We wouldn't have or join phan clubs if we didn't. Along with Erik we have favorite Christines, Carlottas, Megs etc. Perhaps even a few Raouls stand apart giving the women in the audience a genuine understanding of Christine's dilemma. (As American Michael Piontek who closed the show in L.A. did for me.)

However, I take serious issue with a letter penned by one Gina LoBiondo from Pennsylvania here in the States.

Like many, before seeing the show that frankly and unashamedly took over my life for the four years it ran in L.A., I was tremendously skeptical over any Los Angeles, possibly pop singer trained, canary following in the footsteps of Sarah Brightman who for me was Christine Daae incarnate.

So Dale had a uphill road to hoe with me. For those of you who've not heard her, I've a news flash. She made it! She throws the note at the end of "Think of Me" to the ceiling and it stays there till she slides into the curtsy.

I have sat in the second row of both the orchestra and balcony and can feel her emotion equally. She doesn't duck backstage and have glycerin applied to her cheeks prior to the poignant scenes if that's what dear fellow phantom lover Gina seemed to feel. She conveys sentiment and passion as convincingly as Crawford ever has.

That view now stated I'll address myself to another issue that I've found disturbing since Phantom began in L.A.

I've always felt, due to the eloquent beauty of Lloyd Webber's music and the magic of the theatre itself, we are set apart as admirers of this show from what the press and media like to label "fan--fanatics." We don't stalk them, harass them, demand to have their children, etc. (Well most of us don't anyway.) But what we *do* do is in a way, just as bad. Have your favorites, by all means. But this show was not scripted or composed for you or me exclusively.

Cameron and Andrew (if I may be so bold) owe the appeal of this opera to the fact that it has something for everyone. Folks, must we really trash anyone who dares to pull the wool over Hal Prince's eyes and fool the producers into thinking they can possibly do adequate impressions of Michael Crawford, Sarah Brightman, Steve Barton and all the other original stars we've listened to with rapturous approval because they were the first to do these roles?

I think not. Don't misunderstand that by giving the longest running Christine (in L.A. or anywhere else in the world) her due that I'm slamming Sarah. Though I have not seen her Christine in person, I have many video clips of her interpretation and found her quite capable, despite Mr. Rich's opinion (but since I'm refraining from profanity I won't give a review of this reviewer).

I have however seen Sarah in "Aspects of Love" and was delighted. My sister and I saw her several times in the tour of "The Music of ALW" and when Cindy sculpted a plaque of a scene from Phantom, Sarah invited her backstage for a private visit. It made her month.

My closing (finally!) consensus is this. We love this show and indulge ourselves in favorites. Others don't fit what we see the characters as being, but they may hit the bullseye with someone else.

It's apparent Ms. LoBiondo is a writer, so as one to another I respectfully suggest you not use your apparent talents in slashing the favorite Christine of many (including this writer) to prove your way with words. For instance, I'd enjoy reading a poem. Perhaps about Sarah?

From Robyn Paul, Ontario, Canada:

I've loved Erik's story since reading Gaston Leroux's book. I definitely believe it's a true story. I first saw Phantom in Toronto with my grade 8 class last December. I had been looking forward to the trip for two years.

The show was wonderful. Peter Karrie was guest-starring at that show. I was amazed by the power of his voice. Many times during the show I had to remind myself to keep breathing! Since then I've seen it two more times (that's all I can afford) and I've loved each show. I've seen Colm Wilkinson and he was also magnificent. When I was back recently for my third visit I had high hopes of seeing Peter Karrie again, as our new Phantom. I was disappointed that Cris Groenendaal was performing Phantom. Despite my disappointment I enjoyed his portrayal of the Phantom, especially the final scene. As for the rest of the cast, they all do a great job. I liked both Christines I've seen, Teresa De Zarn and Gay Willis.

I loved Susan Kay's novel. The ending moves me to tears everytime I read it. I don't think she could have done a more beautiful job of writing the story of Erik's life.

From Christine Hope, Manchester, UK:

I've seen the Phantom 20 plus times - not a record number I know, but that ugly thing called money is restricted. Most have been London performances but I've seen the Manchester production 3 times with another booking for Feb 1995. I've also seen the Vancouver and Toronto versions, the latter with Colm Wilkinson.

My husband is a keen theatre goer and usually has advance knowledge about future productions, so we booked for our very first Phantom some months before a cast was announced. You can imagine our surprise to learn Michael Crawford was to play the lead. The star of "Some Mothers Do Have 'Em" and "Barnum"? However, I have to say that Michael remains for me the no 1 Phantom with Sarah Brightman the best Christine. Dave Willetts is 2nd favourite. For me nobody else can compare with these two.

Christine should stay with the Phantom, shouldn't she? I was even more convinced of this after reading the Leroux novel. He doesn't seem a monster to me and when he died I wanted to cry.

Writing this letter I've realized I can't put down in words why the Phantom has such an effect on me - it just does. I would go mad if I didn't know I had another "fix" arranged for some time in the future. My most recent visit was last week - I'll just have to live on that for a little longer!

From Tonia Wand, NSW, Australia:

I had vaguely heard about Phantom in the news but hadn't really focused on it until I heard the song "Music of the Night" sung by Tony Barber (an Australian game show host). He didn't sing it at all well, looking back now, but I was stunned by the lyrics and the music. I then bought the OLC recording and was hooked. I quickly ferretted out Leroux's original novel as well as the Susan Kay one and discovered the complicated, brooding, hypnotic and incredibly sensual Erik! I saw the ALW production for the first time in Melbourne. We saw the understudy, Donald Cant, that night. I was mesmerized. I'm not sure if it's because it was the first time and therefore very special but I preferred him to Rob Guest who I saw on subsequent viewings. Donald Cant was more intense and emotional, especially in the final lair scene. Also his moans and movements in the Angel scene more heart-rending. Rob seemed too controlled. This was confirmed for me recently when I saw him perform Music of the Night on a Midday show special that was aired live from the Theatre Royal. He just doesn't evoke Erik's delicate, flowing sensuousness of body movement that is so compelling. I have a tape of Michael Crawford doing the song and he has much more intensity and emotion - you can really see is deep love for Christine.

On the rose and the shattered writing: I think the rose is a symbol of the Phantom's passion and desire. The shattered writing could represent his state of mind or his fantasy world coming into contact with Christine's reality.

When I first saw the Lloyd Webber show I was struck by the Auction scene. The "old" Raoul seems almost bitter and sad when he refers to the monkey music box. What is he doing there? It appeared to me, from this scene, that he and Christine **didn't** live happily ever after, and that the whole business with the Phantom affected their lives and their relationship profoundly. Peter Cousens once said in an interview that he thought Christine would've had a nervous breakdown. As Erik doesn't die in this version perhaps he re-appears in their lives, or Christine may've left Raoul, or...? What do others think?

Regarding your question about "Point of No Return" - I agree! It is absurd; Christine would know immediately it's him. In the latest newsletter from the MCIFA, Dale Kristen reckons that Hal Prince has changed this scene. She says she played it like she was in a trance as his voice is so mesmerizing, and only came to when she touches him. Has anyone seen it played like this? With any other Christines?

Yes, that's how I think it should be played, and I expect Hal Prince has changed it. Change it back! I saw June Crowley play it like that in Toronto and it was WONDERFUL (see my letter).

From Shelia Adam, NJ, USA:

With regards to Christine in PONR, from what I've seen I think she really did know it was her Angel of Music, but she was trying to stay in character and was hesitant to show any acknowledgement of his identity for fear of what could happen if she did. So many thoughts were racing through her mind - his distorted face, the misfortunes of the past, even the murders - surely these were all accidents? When she touched his mask perhaps she wondered should she remove it and show him and the world there was no reason to hide behind it. Having heard his beautiful voice and music, there was nothing to fear from seeing his face. But then Piangi's body was found, and her feelings and thoughts took a different turn - how could this have been an accident? Did she not later say his face held no horror for her now - it's in his soul that the true distortion lay! Did she not kiss his unmasked face to show him that he could be loved for himself despite his acts of violence? They shared a special bond and a special love and she'd ALWAYS be a part of his life.

What if she chose neither Erik nor Raoul, and decided to live her life in solitude, what if she committed suicide? If she chose Raoul, would it not be safer for Erik to have allies in the world above? That's the beauty of Sir Andrew's Phantom - it allows the audience to be participants, not just spectators.

From Ian Fox, West Midlands, UK:

I liked John England's suggestion of Placido, Kiri and Jose. Perhaps not on stage, but a recording like Kiri's "West Side Story" would be marvellous. I really detest Jose Carreras so he would be good as Raoul (!) but he would ruin "All I Ask of You" forever.

In response to your question about what happens to Erik at the end, I must agree with Peter Karrie. I'm sure he's going to start a new life. If they had intended Erik to die, the final scene would have been very different, Erik's death would have been written in, I'm sure. Christine's dressing room: God knows why there is a man's hat and cloak in there! Mirror problem? What mirror problem? Erik **owns** that Opera House, I'm absolutely positive he would have access to every single nook and cranny of the place, especially the main dressing rooms. There would be hidden corridors everywhere.

Now, "Point of No Return". Above all, we must remember that Christine is an actress. As an actor myself, I know that you carry on acting whatever is going on on stage. Christine knows all right, as soon as Don Juan utters his first word, but being a professional she carries on, she resists as long as she can but at "consume us" she is actually looking at her partner really for the first time, and she suddenly realizes that the duet is no longer part of the opera, but for real.

I'm very pleased about the appearance of more men on the Phantom scene. I was beginning to wonder if there

were any more male Phans out there. I know I get as emotional and involved as my female counterparts so there must be more of you - get in touch! (57 Belbroughton Road, Clent, Nr Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 9RD).

I have to poke my nose in and disagree with you about PONR. I don't think Christine would continue acting in a situation like that. Leroux tells us she was a chorus girl, ALIV a ballet dancer - whatever, she was not a trained actress. Opera then was about singing, they didn't put the sort of acting we are used to into it. Christine was, by that stage, an extremely emotionally unbalanced girl, who was scared to be doing it in the first place - I don't think she would have stayed on stage with the Phantom just because "the show must go on", she'd only stay if she was entranced by his voice. And I've only ever seen one actress really show that.

From Tracy Ann McGoey, Ontario, Canada:

I got back yesterday from a glorious week in Toronto. It was my first time seeing Peter Karrie in the role, and he was absolutely fabulous. I just love how each actor brings their own interpretation to the role. But I have still never had my heart ripped out as when I saw Colm Wilkinson perform it. I am so broken-hearted he has left.

I read in the "These Things Do Happen" section that the Phantom once failed to disappear at the end. Do you know how the Phantom compensated for the mistake?

Read this issue's section for two examples. The microphones are turned off at the sound desk when the actor isn't singing, so Meg always listens for the Phantom's whisper just in case. In one case when the cloak was pulled back to reveal the Phantom in the early days, he snarled and ran off. Of course, if the sound desk forget to turn off the microphone there'd be problems...

From Lesley Hatch, W. Midlands, UK:

What happens at the end of PHANTOM? Well, I have always thought that Erik does indeed start a new life - I'll grant you that he doesn't seem to have anything left to live for, with Christine going back to Raoul, but I don't think he's the type to just give up on living. He'll have his memories, to be sure, but he's practical enough to know that you can't live on those and, after a period of adjustment, if you like, he'll find something else to do. I don't know what, exactly, but he wouldn't lack for the means to do whatever he wanted, given that the previous Opera owners had been paying him for a long time.

Now to answer Lottie. I would be the first to agree that Erik is all the things you say he is, but like Christine D. I like older men. I could give you a long list of them, but that isn't really relevant here. Taking your points in order, Christine would have no occasion to burn his dinner - for one thing, as I said above, he is a man of independent means, and he could easily afford servants. For another, he's probably a pretty mean cook himself - he'd have to be, living alone.

As for Raoul, I think you summed him up pretty well, except that I think he was trying to force Christine to marry him in a (futile) effort to get her away from Erik's influence. OK, he's good-looking, but it isn't the way he's written so much that makes him a 'pea-brain', it's the fact that he's a product of (probably centuries) of in-breeding, which you tend to get in noble families. I don't think he has a sense of humour, either - in fact, I would suggest that he's (as you say) a nit-wit, prepared to go to some very strange lengths to save Christine. He doesn't exactly come to her rescue, in fact it's Christine who rescues him by saying she'll stay with Erik. Now, having said that, I concede that in the beginning Erik only wants Christine for her voice, but it doesn't stay that way for long. He ends up loving her, and what you see as forcing her to marry him is actually a proposal of marriage made in a way that is unique to him. I agree, though, that it would be nice to see a story about Raoul.

Until someone actually sets out what Erik's reasons were for doing all the things he did, I don't think anyone can say one way or the other that he was justified. Maybe someone could have a try at giving those reasons?

And how do we know that Erik wasn't prepared to die for Christine's sake? Things could easily have turned nasty at the end with all those people after him - he could have chosen to remain behind and let them get him, but he didn't, though whether the escape was planned or not is another matter. I tend to think it was a spur of the moment action.

And finally, to answer Diana. I've sat under the chandelier a couple of times, yes - once I was in the second row of the stalls and another time about halfway up. I can, however, tell you that you get the same thrill even when you're in the front row of the circle and it descends.

From Margaret Uren, Lancs, UK:

This is just to say thank you to Andrea Stephenson "Willets" and Kathryn "Firmin" Bell for arranging such a good and friendly meeting of PAS members in Manchester, even though we were only a small group. The meeting was a success and a great chance to meet other members. What made it really special was meeting two of the cast, Garth Bardsley and Valda Aviks, who came along to have a drink and a chat with us. It was really interesting to meet them and share their views on Phantom. Garth Bardsley, who knows the show backwards after acting various roles in it, was especially good to talk to and seemed genuinely interested in all our views, and Valda was charming to all of us. Many thanks once again to Andrea and Kathryn for inviting them along.

As many of the cast in Manchester will soon be changing I must congratulate them all on giving us such great enjoyment. Dave was of course superb, Lisa, Josie, Mike, Garth, Valda, Alan, Simon, Geoffrey, Paul and Lucy all gave great individual performances and made the show extra special. Infact, the whole show in my opinion was far better than the recording I heard recently of Michael Crawford's last performance in LA. Michael was excellent, but I'm afraid I didn't rate the rest of the cast at all. They lacked charisma. Compared to the Manchester cast it was,

to quote, "Amateurs". So well done Manchester, and how sorry I am it hasn't been recorded to prove it to everyone.

I'd caution against judging a cast from a dodgy tape, because the acting adds so much. But I agree with you that the Manchester cast is excellent. Let's hope the new one keeps up the good work.

From Amanda, NSW, Australia:

I have to say that whether Raoul is a wimp or not depends entirely on the ability (and sex-appeal) of the actor. Take Sydney's Raoul, Peter Cousens. Nobody who has seen him could possibly say he's wimpy. Apart from being absolutely drop-dead gorgeous (totally unbiased of course!), he is a strong actor and gives Christine someone to lean on - and he doesn't buckle under the pressure.

I've seen three Raouls - Dale Burridge, Rohan Tickell and Peter, and thought that the first two failed to live up to the potential of the character.

Whereas Dale and Rohan seem to merely drift through the role, there only to bear the brunt of the Phantom's anger, Peter gets the bit between the teeth and throws himself onto whatever emotion he can find to turn Raoul into a worthy adversary for Christine's affections, and making him into someone that I, at least, admire. (Of course, that may have something to do with the man behind the mask, so to speak.)

He does tend to look rather ridiculous at times (especially hanging off the end of a rope), but one of his best moments is his expression when the Phantom booms "For once Monsieur le Vicomte is right..." - truly wicked - as though for once he has got the better of the Phantom.

Mme Giry couldn't possibly be Erik's sister. Part of his - dare I say it - problem seems to be that he's never had anyone to love him, or been able, until now, to love. And if that is true, she can't be his sister. I think it is possible that she knew him as a child, she seems to be a lot older than him. Perhaps also, she travelled and, like the Persian, was an acquaintance, a friend who offered Erik companionship for a while and discovered, quite by accident, that he was the Opera Ghost. Erik, being Erik, would have seen a use for her, knowing she would not betray him, for anyone who has known Erik seems to have some sort of loyalty to him. (Even Raoul in SK's novel).

Maybe this leaves everyone even more confused, but, what can I say? Erik tends to do that to a person.

As for the man's hat and cloak in the dressing room - where would you expect Christine to be? Of course she is going to be in Carlotta's dressing room - not being a star, she wouldn't have her own, but neither would she be expected to dress with the chorus when replacing the prima donna, and as Carlotta has run out, it's the logical place. As for Christine singing "Here in this room", is it not conceivable that the Phantom will have spoken to her before this very important performance?

Naturally there is going to be a way for the Phantom into Carlotta's dressing room, for no other reason than to make it easier to spook her, so why not behind the mirror?

I must admit though, I've never really thought much about the dressing room, and I can't say I've ever noticed a man's cloak - maybe there isn't one in the Australian Phantom. Oh well, I guess I'll have to go back to see. What a shame!

This bit of the letter arrived a few days later...

I'm writing to refute the last letter I sent. (Strange, I know, but what can you expect?) In the bit about Raoul/Peter Cousens - it might be understood that I prefer Raoul to Erik. Please! How could anyone ever think that?! It's just too horrible! I will never love and have never loved Raoul more than the Phantom. Not in this lifetime or any other. As for Raoul being a wus, of course he is, especially when stood up with Erik. How much of a wus he is depends entirely on the actor.

There. That's my say. I love Erik.

From Sharon L Taylor, Texas, USA:

I just wanted to take a moment now to tell you a couple of things about the Third National Tour. Grant Norman, despite his incredibly ordinary name, was a fascinating Phantom. He's the first one I've seen who hasn't performed most of the role full-voice. In fact, his "Music of the Night" was so varied that I actually worried about his vocal strength in Act One. In retrospect, I wonder if he had a throat problem that night which only affected his voice when he held back. He more than earned the role in the second act. And when I saw him perform again two weeks later, his first act was equally strong. His was definitely the most colorful vocal performance I've heard in person, and the final scenes were absolutely mesmerizing. I could see every emotion the man was feeling on his face, grotesque make-up or not. His was also one of the gentlest interpretations I've seen.

John Schroeder was a strong Raoul, a little aloof as perhaps befits a viscomte but very playful at the end of the roof sequence. I've never seen Christine spun joyously around so many times! I'm sure the actress' laughter was genuine. John was also my first blond Raoul, albeit he was a dark blond. The first time I saw Phantom on Broadway, I was shocked when a brunette Raoul (Kevin Gray) appeared on stage. Okay, I was a little naive back in 1989... But it really distracted me. I was obviously too accustomed to Steve Barton's photos in the Complete Book. When I saw Phantom again, I expected a brunette Raoul and wasn't disappointed. Last year, when I saw the Second National Tour in Dallas, I didn't even notice Raoul's hair. In June, I finally had a blond Raoul, and my first impression was: "You know, without the opera glasses, if you use your imagination a little... he kind of resembles Anthony Warlow." (When I saw the cast again in early July, I made a very different observation: John looks a lot like the star of Forever Knight, if anyone is familiar with that Canadian TV show. His resemblance to

Anthony Warlow was definitely overplayed in my mind.) I don't know if this is typical choreography or not, but John's Raoul showed little interest in the opera at the beginning until one of the opera managers told him the identity of the singer. Then Raoul grabbed a programme, scoured it for Christine's name, then grabbed the opera glasses and became very enthused. So much for a real interest in opera...

Christine herself (Adrienne McEwan) sang the most beautiful "Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again" that I've possibly ever heard. Just breathtaking! (I must confess that all I could think when the set first appeared, however, was: "A cross just like that fell off the stage with Dave Willetts inside recently!" Visualizing it from afar isn't as numbing as visualizing it with the set right in front of you.) Her delivery of the line "You'll guard me and you'll guide me" in Act I suddenly made me realize that she basically wanted Raoul to be a surrogate Phantom in her life. After all, she calls the Phantom her "guide and guardian" during "Angel of Music." Adrienne has real strength in her voice and seemed to really secretly love the Phantom at the beginning, judging from her flushed smile when Madame Giry told her how he'd be pleased. She also stood up to him quite effectively in the final act.

The Phantom did something at the end that absolutely broke your heart. He huddled down by the monkey and put his arm around it, cupping his hand shakily to the right side of its face as if it were a half-mask as he sang the lines from "Masquerade" - a very nice touch.

The rest of the cast was wonderful as well, especially Madame Giry, the opera managers and Carlotta. Meg wasn't much of a singer, but the actresses cast in that role seldom are. There was also a problem with the drapes at the beginning, as is common with the road show (at least from my experience). In Dallas last year, the drapes of the Second National Company became tangled on the angels' feet, and you could see little white hands on the catwalk trying to yank them up. It was actually quite depressing, because I was already irritated by Kevin Gray's untimely departure from the cast and an obnoxious encounter with a merchandiser in the lobby. The scene setting at the beginning is usually beautiful, and they had to rush everything because of the delay. This time, all the drapes disappeared beautifully except for one. Then someone gave it a yank (no hands visible!), and it rippled "mysteriously" and instantly out of sight. The chandelier went up a little slowly in Houston, so a few backdrops still went up faster than expected, but I doubt that first-time audience members noticed anything out of kilter. And then there was the matter of Christine's veil peeking out from under the tasseled curtain at the end... Someone yanked it out of sight just in time for the curtain call. I only wish that the candles rose fully from the stage... That's the one thing I dislike about the American road shows: candles rise from the deck, but only to knee-level. I thought that in Dallas they rose to the next tier, but since they didn't in Houston, I must be mistaken. (Of course, it's a different touring company, so perhaps the traveling stage is a different depth.) The tall candelabra move in from the wings, and it's just not the same. So much for Freudian allusions... I must confess, however, that the more times I've seen the touring version, the less I've been distracted by this change.

Overall, the show was wonderful. And I had the added pleasure of purchasing an autographed window card in the lobby after the performance. Fate, perhaps? After all, Phantom is the one major musical for which I'd never bought a showcard - which is strange indeed, since Phantom was my first Broadway show.

From Sarah Wright, Norfolk, UK:

As promised, a review of my recent Phantom visit. I saw Ethan Freeman, Jill Washington and Clive Carter, with Piangi and Meg understudies. Since it was 5 years since my last visit, I was surprised at how much detail I'd forgotten. I remembered the scenes going along much faster. Anyway, to the performances. Ethan Freeman was a superb Phantom - very emotional and excellent vocal ability. Jill Washington again was excellent, gradually increasing Christine's singing ability during the performance. I must disagree with people saying Raoul is a wimp - the two I've seen did not fall in to that category. Having seen Clive Carter as Javert, it was good to see him in a totally alien role, and I can't fault his performance. Raoul doesn't have much scope to develop the character.

The only disappointments were Meg, played by Jee Hyun Noh, who didn't have the vocal abilities really, and at the end Ethan was obviously having problems with the chair as Meg didn't pull the cloak off. Of course to most of the audience nothing was wrong - they haven't changed the ending, I suppose? (Nope.) I won't even try to compare the performance to the one I originally saw with Dave Willetts as time has faded my memory and a comparison wouldn't be fair.

From one review to another. I just recently finished reading "Phantom" by Susan Kay. I really enjoyed it up until it joined the original story, where I didn't like the style as much or the ending. But on the whole a very interesting background to the Phantom.

From John England, Hull, UK:

In reply to the logo question: Erik loved nature's simple beauty. The rose has become the universal symbol of love and affection, and in the original story Mme Giry finds a rose in Box Five. The song "The Rose/Hello Again" from Dave Willetts' album "On and Off Stage" demonstrates the true meaning of the rose.

From "Cosette", Essex, UK:

As number 904 of the Michael Ball fan club I was very excited by the offer of going to see him record one of his popular TV shows. The studio was packed with a massive audience as I took my seat right at the front with my best friend number 906 next to me. Michael came on a little later. His hair seemed longer than ever before and his blue eyes sparkled as he looked out at the audience - it was his 32nd birthday and he was in very high spirits. He

introduced his guest, Tony Bennett, who I'd never heard of, who then sang something from his latest album. Then Cher came on (who I had heard of!) and sang "It Ain't Necessarily So". Michael then dueted with her, accompanied by George Martin and Larry Adler, in a beautiful rendition of Gershwin's "Summertime". Then Michael launched into a big number "Dancing in the Streets" and wound his backers up something rotten! Afterwards he performed the beautiful love song "The Rose", proving his versatility as an actor as well as a singer - you see, Michael never just sings songs, he acts them too. Next came the song we'd all been waiting for, his latest single release "From Here to Eternity", a big, fun, up-tempo song with small hints of his Celtic background. The whole recording was an excellent time, and I bet the party afterwards was something to experience, too...

From Elaine "Phantomess" Simpson, Yorks, UK:

After reading other people's views about their fave Phantom and I can understand their views about them and I have my fave Phantom, but I believe that it's best to see other people playing the leading role of Phantom, as I fear that the main ones will become too typecast in the role and won't feel at ease playing other major roles, even though I wish all our faves could play the Phantom forever! But I believe it is best to let other people play the role and see if they can do well with it. Maybe some have not got it and maybe some have, it all depends on the voice or talent.

I may not have been so lucky to see the show as many times as some readers have, but I have enjoyed what I have seen. I have seen the followed Phantoms: Dave Willetts, Peter Straker (Ken Hill's version) and Paul Monaghan, the understudy Phantom in Manchester. I feel that I would also enjoy seeing other Phantoms as well, besides the forementioned ones, if I had the money to see them, but I will one day.

I am at the moment enjoying listening to other recordings of Phantom from overseas, and they give me a real insight to the person playing Erik, despite singing in a foreign language - so long as it's Erik that all what matters. My main feeling about Phantom is I feel whoever plays him is taking on a great task, and I am sure that Erik will be happy to see anyone who has the courage to play the role of him whatever talent they have. But the most important thing of all, whoever plays him, let's hope that the show remains on the top and never comes off the West End or Broadway or other places, as that will be a great pity.

I am glad that ALW's Phantom does not die in the end but always remains a mystery. That really brings me happiness and I like that very much indeed. Long live Erik!

From Christine Daaé, Herts, UK:

I have to add a few of my own opinions to the replies to Lottie de Mercy's letter. Lottie, you say that the writers of Phantom make Raoul too soft. Have you read Leroux? I assume you have. Don't you think that Leroux's Raoul is far MORE of a wimp than Raoul in the show? And as for Christine accidentally burning Erik's dinner - sorry, but I can't see Erik letting Christine slave away over a hot stove. Only Raoul would let her do such demeaning tasks!

You say that Raoul doesn't brainwash or manipulate Christine, but in his own unintelligent way he does. He uses their childhood friendship to try to influence her feelings towards him, reminding her of thier times with her father. He is a link with her past, with her dead father, and she is afraid to let go of that link. Raoul is the safe option. He represents the teachings of her catholic upbringing - Erik represents the side of herself that she hardly knows about because it's been repressed by her upbringing, and by men like Raoul who don't want women to follow their own desires but to have babies for them to carry on the family line. Does Raoul actually listen to Christine's feelings? No. She says she can't go out - he gives her two minutes to get ready, ignoring her completely! She says she can't sing in Don Juan and runs off - next thing, Raoul's spouting mock-heroic rubbish about how the disaster will be Erik's. Why? Because he assumes that Christine will give in and sing. In the next scene she's clearly changed her mind. Who persuaded her? Take three guesses. He happily puts her in what he would consider to be danger. Who stops the marksmen shooting at Erik so he can run off with Christine? Raoul. Very caring! Terribly heroic of him to rush off and rescue her when it was his fault she got abducted anyway!

That's just a fraction of what I could say, of course... On to another point. When I was chatting to Christine K, she mentioned the six month gap between the acts. What are we meant to believe has gone on during this time? Has Christine been down to the lair again at all? Please send in your views, and if any of our fiction writers feel like filling in the gap, please send us the results...

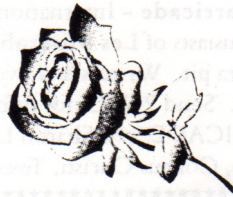
I also have to put my response to Carrie Hernandez's piece here. Sorry, Carrie, but I don't agree with you about Erik's physical appearance, at least. I don't think that Leroux meant smelling of death was the smell of rotting meat. It takes a while for a dead body to start to rot, and I've always read it as meaning Erik smelt like someone who'd died rather more recently than that - stale and unpleasant, but not rotting. He goes to the manager's dinner, he can clearly move around among "normal" people with a false nose and he tells Christine he has a mask that will enable them to live like a normal couple. I'm sure the people who sat next to Erik at the dinner would have made more of a fuss if he smelt of rotting meat! Leroux describes Erik as pale, with such deep dark eye sockets that he looked like a death's head. But when he wears the false nose at the manager's dinner he is thought ugly, but passes as one of the guests. It is the lack of nose, coupled with the drawn face and deep sockets that almost hide his eyes that make him look like a skull. The "living corpse" is Christine's description when she pulls the mask off and sees anger and pain in Erik's face, emotion that you don't see in the face of a dead skull. The impression I get from Leroux's description isn't one that would put me off Erik at all.

Anyway, I'm sure everyone else will want to give their views on the piece so I'll shut up. By the way, please don't misunderstand me, I found your article fascinating and I hope you'll write plenty more for us in the future!

Finally (promise!), a few more views on Toronto. On the second night I saw the show I was three rows away from the stage and near the middle, so I could really see the expressions that tend to get lost in the Pantages. Perhaps it's just that I've never watched a Christine so closely, but Teresa De Zarn's acting in the first scene was wonderful. I have never seen a Christine put so much into it. She was always drifting into a daze, gazing at the ceiling, hearing whispers and looking for Erik. When Carlotta began to sing "Think of Me" she mimed along, again in a kind of trance as if she was remembering her lessons. Really brilliant. June Crowley, the alternate, had a brilliant voice and though I wasn't as struck by her acting, she did "PONR" as it should be done - Christine was put in a trance the moment she heard Erik's voice, she wasn't acting as if nothing was wrong. She believed the words she was singing, until she felt his mask and snapped out of it. In the sense that she really believed what she sang, it wasn't acting, it was a sexier scene even than Dave "hands go everywhere" Willetts' one. And that brings me on to Peter Karrie, of course. Before I go on about the brilliant bits, as usual, I'll point out three things which he isn't doing as well as he did in London. His hands *used* to go almost as far as Dave Willetts', and he used to sit clutching his hands in agony while Christine sang, but he wasn't doing that this time. Also, when she rips the mask from his face he didn't scream out, it was more sort of numb shock, which I don't think works as well. And finally, he's not sobbing quite as much as he did here. Peter, put all that back in! Oh, and his make-up isn't half as good as it was here, but that's not his fault.

I'll try not to go on too much about how brilliant he was since you've already got the CD review... I'll just say that when he hit the "be" in Music of the Night it echoed round the theatre, and I wasn't quite sure whether the woman in front of me said "Wow" or "Ow".

A couple of differences in the productions - Rae said that the "Doors Secured" tape was the same as in London, but it wasn't. Have they changed it recently? And they don't have a man's hat and cloak in the dressing room, they have a woman's bonnet, which is far more sensible. The flares at the end of the Mausoleum scene are about 50 times more powerful than ours - they really blind you, even if you cover your eyes, and you can feel the heat from them a good few rows back.



MICHAEL CRAWFORD Colour Photo-Prints of Original Drawings by Chris Davis

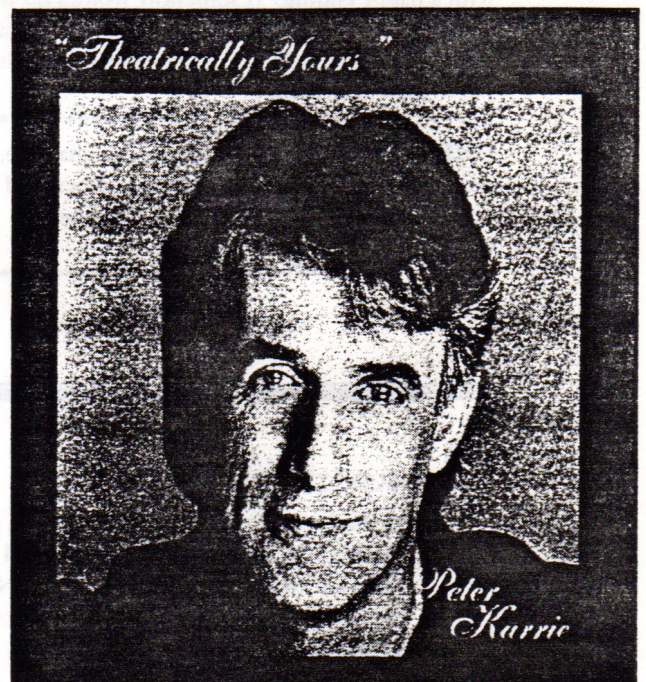
All profits donated to the SCT.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1) Barnum (clown costume) | 10) "Who is the Man in the Mask?" |
| 2) Across the Lake | 11) "Is this what you wanted to see?" |
| 3) Phantom (on black) | 12) Michael in concert -ALW |
| 4) "Floating, Falling" | 13) Michael "portrait" |
| 5) Red Death | 14) Phantom and veil "Wishing for Christine" |
| 6) Mausoleum | |
| 7) Phantom and Christine | |
| 8) Michael as PT Barnum | |
| 9) Michael | |

£6 each. Set of any 12 - £56. Set of any 8 - £36. Set of any 4 - £20.
Sterling only. Prices include p&p. Cheques payable to: Mrs CF Davis.

Mrs Chris Davis,
1 Coniston Walk
Fareham
Hants, PO14 1LB, UK.

Please allow 28 days for delivery.



"THEATRICALY YOURS"

Peter Karrie

"Magnificantly-voiced... a powerful and sensitive interpreter of musical scores" - Sir Tim Rice

"Peter Karrie's renditions of Bring Him Home and the Anthem are the best I've heard" - Bernard J Taylor

Available on CD and cassette (FG-01-2)

ADVERTISEMENTS

Free ads - please send in anything you'd like us to print, and please always enclose an SAE or IRC when you're replying to an ad, especially from overseas. Tell them where you saw the ad. We have decided to save some space by including our "trade" ads on a sheet for new members instead of printing them here each issue. We can also offer larger ads - send SAE for prices.

AVON BOUTIQUE, 598 Concession Street, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8V 1B3. Tel: (905) 388 2981. Phantom fans' heaven - a shop of Phantom merchandise where fans are more than welcome to come along to chat, play music, and generally indulge in their passion. Send CANS3 for catalogue - they do overseas mail order, and I strongly recommend you write!

PENFRIENDS WANTED, from anywhere, anyone who loves Phantom, especially Erik. Also those who like the music of ALW and musical theatre. Please write to: Robyn Paul, 37 James Court, Leamington, Ontario, N8H 4T9, Canada.

WANTED DESPERATELY: OLC souvenir brochure and small programme, any Les Mis merchandise. Info also wanted, infact anything to do with Robin Prince of Sherwood. London prog - Cats, Phantom, Evita, Starlight. Anything from progs to clippings to clips. Clare Blakeborough, 3 Woodburn Close, Ermine West, Lincoln, LN1 3RY

FOR SALE: Night Magic by Charlotte Vale Allen - a sort of modern romance re-write of Phantom, with a happy ending. (I somehow wound up with 2 copies!) Hard cover, AUSS10, plus p&p. Tonia Wand, 46 Marshall Street, Newlambton Heights, NSW 2305, Australia.

DRESS CIRCLE: Show music, merchandise, posters... See "Review" section for address and phone numbers. Best place for recordings of musicals, and they mail overseas.

MASQUERADE - The Stage Musical Fanzine. Issue 16 now available and includes a long interview with Peter Karrie. A subscription costs 75p per copy from Mike Gibb, 32 Woodhill Road, Aberdeen, AB2 4JW.

Burke Backstage - newsletter for fans of Simon Burke. For info send SAE/IRC to Laura Edwards, 18 Bude Road, Filton, BRISTOL, BS12 7HW.

Second Cousens - The Peter Cousens Fan Association. Peter is Raoul in Sydney, and his album "Corner of the Sky" is now out. Send SAE/IRC to Ms Alison Booth, 10 Melaleuca Street, Sunnybank, QLD 4109, Australia, for info.

Warlow's World - quarterly newsletter for Anthony Warlow fans. 2 stamps per issue in Australia, or 2 IRCs overseas. c/o Leanne Richard, 35 Beresford Ave, Beresfield, NSW 2322, Australia.

The Barricade - International newsletter dedicated to enthusiasts of **Les Misérables** on both side of the orchestra pit. Writers and overseas contacts always needed. Send 2 IRCs for information to THE BARRICADE, c/o Sharon L Taylor, PO Box 721253, Corpus Christi, Texas 78472, USA.

VIDEOS: Do you have facilities to transfer US videos to European ones? Or do you know someone who does? I have some Phantom-related tapes from the US which I'm happy to share with anyone who can help me get them transferred. Christine, PAS address.



SUBSCRIPTION DUE.

If this box is ticked, your subscription expires with this issue. The month of your membership renewal is held on our records - re-join now and we list you as re-joining when your membership ends. So if you have a month or two to go, you will NOT lose any months by sending your money now. But you won't get another reminder nearer the time, so we advise people to send in their money when the box is ticked, so no one forgets...

MEMBERSHIP RATES: £7 UK, £8.50 Europe, £10 overseas, or US\$16, CAN/AUSS21. Bank problems are sorted out, so **ALL CHEQUES TO THE PHANTOM APPRECIATION SOCIETY** again please! Thanks for taking note of the new details last time. Note: We can only accept non-sterling cheques when they are drawn through a bank in your own country, ie your normal, personal cheques. All money orders etc must be in sterling. US and Canadian members may find it cheaper to buy issues from Avon Boutique.

REGULAR ADVERTISERS

This is a list of regular advertisers, which we're putting on a sheet for new members to save space in the magazine. Please always send an SAE or an IRC when replying to them.

Phantom photographs: Original cast and Dave Willetts. Rafael, 5 Dalrymple Road, LONDON, SE4 2BQ, UK. Please send SAE or IRC for information. Most photos in colour or b/w, and cost £9 each plus £1 p&p UK. Size 8"x12". Also, Lair scene photo of Dave catching Christine in his arms, which only happens in the UK productions. Rafael is the only photographer to have caught this moment. Limited supplies. Contact proofs are necessary for you to choose the photos you want, and cost £6.50. Sterling only. Contact Rafael for more details. (Also sells shots of Dave without make-up.) Include your phone number in case of queries.

Programmes: SAE/IRC to Louise Grant, 65 Parkside Drive, Edgware, Middx, HA8 8JU. Wide range of theatre programmes for sale. Large stock of Phantom programmes from round the world. Prices range from about £1.50 for London programme to £30 plus for specials like gala brochures. Also has wide range of Michael Crawford programmes, and of course ones from other shows. Stock changes regularly.

Phantom brooch: Bob Saunders, who sculpted the Phantom mask, sells brooches based on Michael Crawford's mask. They are 4cm replicas of the half mask, available in silver for £65 or gold plated for £75, plus £4.95 p&p in each case. I had one made with a pendant fitting instead of a brooch. They are hand made, hence the prices, and beautiful. Inquiries to: Bob Saunders, Applied Arts, 2 Silesia Buildings, LONDON E8 3PX, UK.

AVON BOUTIQUE: Phantom fans' heaven. This is a shop run by Phantom fans. The back half is full of Phantom merchandise and memorabilia, and Phantom fans are welcome to come in and chat. If you are visiting Canada, you HAVE to visit. Lynne and John are really friendly, and if you phone and let them know you're coming they may be able to stay late for you (but you must call and let them know if you then can't make it). They're an hour's bus ride from Toronto. If you can't get to Canada, write and ask for a catalogue and their lists. They do mail order overseas, and there is tons of stuff we don't get in the UK, including Peter Karrie merchandise. Send \$3, or a batch of IRCs. Avon Boutique, 598 Concession Street, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8V 1B3. Tel: (905) 388 2981.